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CHRIST CHURCH DAYS.

An Oxford Story.

"So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man."

TENNYSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Ought not to be read in the Bodleian

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1867.

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Inscribed

TO

JAMES PIKE, ESQ., J.P.

OF OXFORD,

WITH MUCH ESTEEM

AND

IN RECOLLECTION

OF HOSPITALITY AND KINDNESS IN COLLEGE DAYS

BY THE AUTHOR.

Christ Church Days.

CHAPTER I.

The Last Train from Paddington.

THE 8.20 P.M. train from Paddington, on a certain Friday night of October, was a memorable one. It was the last train from London to Oxford, whereby Christ Church men could scramble back to college quarters so as to observe the time fixed by the authorities The people at the Great Western understood that day and that train. Fast and numerous came the Hansoms driving in. Many were the men with cigars, and terriers, and multitudinous wrappings, and innumerable cases. The cabmen look satisfied. The porters

were alert. Recognitions and greetings passed on the platform among the passengers. Some of the men resided in London. Others made a rule of always passing through London on their way to or from the University. I know some men who lived in the North or West of England, who made a point of persuading themselves, as a matter of geographical fact, that it was impossible to go to Oxford without going to London first. Little knots of men would have arranged a meeting to dine together, and to travel down by the same train. The journey down did not seem long. There was plenty to talk about, and as the train entered the Oxford station, and the scrambles for cabs commenced, some engagement would be made for some tea or supper that night, or for a breakfast next morning.

Till late that night cabs were rolling up to the gates of the quadrangles. Nothing was ever done the ensuing Saturday. Men strolled into each other's rooms to

see who had arrived. The employment of that Saturday was to write one's name in the Dean's book, and to call on the tutor. Most of us quiet men thought we might as well be punctual as not in these light duties. The Long Vacation had always supplied a plentiful budget of news. Dudley had climbed Monte Rosa, and nearly lost his life in a *crevasse*. Harcourt had been salmon fishing in Norway. Other men had been to North Wales, or the Lakes, or Scotland. One, I remember, had gone to America and back, and saw a good deal of Canadian life in the Long. Others had been magnificently reposing in their ancestral halls. Various men had belonged to reading parties, which, as a rule, did not seem to have arrived at any very positive results. There were a great many tales of adventure, among which, it may be observed, there was always a goodly percentage of love stories.

I think the commencement of the Octo-

ber term was the part of the academic year which I liked best. There was peculiar pleasure in returning to the old pursuits, and renewing the old friendships. The late-flowering trees of the Broad Walk had still abundant foliage, beautiful in autumnal tints, and some leaves will be lingering on till Christmas itself. The network of gardens and waters, with which Oxford is surrounded, is gloriously burnished by the later summer—the summer of St. Luke. It is a brief interval of fair weather, before winter, prosaic and practical, sets in. For a few weeks we may renew the rambles and expeditions of the vanished summer tour. Men first settle down in their rooms, or go off to the *Union*, to write letters home to their friends, announcing their safe arrival, and intimating the amount of *battels*. Caps and gowns, in a state of *débris*, are hunted out. The watchful care of scouts has ordered in abundant stores from grocers and confectioners. The surplices

are freshly laid out for the full choral services of the morrow morn.

The first Sunday of Term was always a high day. The cathedral-like structures of the colleges of Christ Church, Magdalen, Merton, and New were thronged. Especially was Christ Church cathedral thronged in the afternoon. No orders of admission were necessary, and the Oxford townsfolk crowded in. The organist selected one of his finest anthems. The choir did its very best. The long lines of white-robed students filled the cathedral as far as the great east window and the burning lights on the altar. The people gathered closely about the side chapels, and the monuments in the nave, and at the portals. There was something noble in the sight of that goodly, and, for the most part, youthful multitude, in the crash of the magnificent music, in measured intonation and cadence. I am afraid Sunday is hardly very reverently observed in Oxford. It is the great day of the week for breakfasts

and wines. But there is, nevertheless, a strong element of profound, if latent, devotion here. And those who in the purple flush of youth enter with most keenness into the stir and enjoyment of life, have still a natural, instinctive sense of piety, the tradition of holy things, and feel that in this noble service there is something which appeals very closely to what is best in them, and makes the college service more solemn and more real, and gives them more real and solemn feelings than they would admit to themselves or give each other credit for.

Some such impressions as these stand out especially in my *souvenirs* of the opening of an October term.

CHAPTER II.

After the Long Vacation.

HILE the actors are preparing to group themselves upon the stage let me first advert to the scenery of my story. The scene revealed to you when the curtain draws up is the royal and ancient foundation of Christ Church, Oxford. I had been meditating on the College of St. Swithen or St. Boniface in the renowned university of Oxbridge or Camford. This, however, would be an affectation, and most likely a transparent affectation. I therefore at once hasten to establish that good understanding which it is always desirable should exist between author and reader. Having "given up" the name of the college, I

shall take more than the usual licence of the novelist in the free invention rather than attempted portraiture of character and incident. It may be lawful, while thus on classic ground, to say that so far back as Thucydides, that wise Greek noted how the drama of life is constantly repeating itself in all manner of ways, and any supposed resemblances are to be assigned to pure accident.

I have called it the royal foundation of Christ Church, Oxford. The Christ Church mind, however, hardly venerates the memory of its royal founder, Henry VIII. It rejects the bad king, and faithfully clings to the tradition of the great cardinal. We know that if the king had left the cardinal alone, grand as our house is, we should have had something much grander. The king merely murdered the founder, confiscated the revenues, stole the conception, and did imperfectly what had been planned on a wonderful scale of wisdom and munificence. He did us the

honour of requesting to be called our founder.

For ages we have, with our outward lips, recognized that courtly lie. We have had for ages a solemn service at a stated season to commemorate the religious memory of our pious benefactor. I trust Mr. Froude regularly "assists" thereat. "The memory of the just is blessed," are the words chanted as a special and suitable prelude. "The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance," is the antiphon. Now that the state services are abrogated, surely this might be abolished, tainted, as it is, by so much inaccuracy and insincerity.

As the visitor enters Oxford by its most pleasing entrance, traversing the beautiful bridge arched over the Cherwell, he stands within the shadow of Magdalen Tower. That perfect tower, which grows upon the mind the more you are familiar with it, is type and memorial of Cardinal Wolsey. In completing this noble architectural de-

sign Wolsey exceeded his limits as college bursar, and had to leave Oxford. This apparent misfortune proved the cause of his pinnacled fortunes, type herein of many a good fellow, even as of the hero of my story, who deduces the good of his life out of the evil. That tower fitliest recalls the memory of Wolsey at Oxford, perhaps the greatest European statesman of his age, who, having sounded the depths of all honour and reverse, what was best of all, died fearing God. As in private duty bound, I commemorate the memory of the founder before I enter upon the modern aspect of the college.

There are endless diversities among the members of the house. Even among the undergraduates themselves there are sometimes no more facts in common than that they are resident within the same walls. Take, for instance, the Honourable Algernon Bohun. He belongs to a family of immemorial antiquity and multitudinous quarterings. When his family, after the

manner of great families, became impoverished, the pictures sold from the walls and the timber felled upon the acres, the sixteenth baron married money. The mixture of plebeian blood increased the vigour of the ancient stock, and the plebeian coin set it off with splendour. The great bulk of the mother's fortune would come to the younger son, that is, the Hon. Algernon Bohun. He was a clever and popular man; liked at Eton, though he neither boated nor cricketed; liked at Oxford, though he was a studious man, and his friends, generally speaking, were not of a studious kind. The Eton manner had attained in him the utmost polish and finish. There was something almost like poetry in his exquisite finish of manner to which few even of Eton men equally attained.

When he first came up to Oxford, some three or four hundred cards were left on his table. He was a member of the best clubs among the Oxford men. His name

was also put down at several of the best clubs in London. Even thus early Mr. Bohun had a high and determinate ambition. He aimed at public life, and through the old-fashioned avenue of university distinction. This is not so much thought of in the days of a reformed parliament, but it is the tradition of our Christ Church statesmen from before the days of Canning to after the days of Gladstone.

There was a great social difference between such a man and Charles Rolfe Dudley. It was not at any of the great public schools that Dudley had received his education. He came from a very second-rate provincial school in the midland counties. But this little school held in its gift a lucrative exhibition to Christ Church. Indeed, the exhibition from Little Goldney was better than any single one from Charterhouse or Westminster. The exhibition was at the least a hundred a year. By the advice of his friends, he stayed over the usual time at

the grammar-school that he might attain this exhibition. His friends were mainly represented by an old uncle, who held a good living in a distant part of the country. Dudley was the senior boarder at the grammar-school, and the best scholar. This was indeed much. The head-master was not an exact scholar; he had left the University some thirty years, and was not acquainted with any of the new lights in scholarship. But he had a very decent notion of construing Greek, and Dudley had construed a very unusual quantity of Greek under his superintendence.

The hundred a year exhibition was easily gained. The uncle added another hundred and twenty a year. The two hundred odd with strict economy might do, but it was little enough for a commoner of Christ Church. At school, Dudley had been *facile princeps*, but at college he at once found his level. The triton among minnows became a minnow among tritons. He found him-

self on strange ground. He knew nobody, and nobody knew him. Had he been at a small college he would at once have known all the men of his year. After that, he would have known men of other years, and then the whole college. A small college is sometimes a happy family where the whole society subsists in a state of friendly intimacy. But the case is very different at a large college, such as Christ Church, Oxford, or Trinity College, Cambridge. A man's former schoolfellows call upon him, and his personal friends and connections. But in a great college no one calls on a new man on the simple ground that he is a member of the same college. For the first few terms Dudley was left very much alone. It was a good thing for him, inasmuch as he worked hard, and reduced his large desultory reading into Oxford order. He found in course of time friends, old and new, in other colleges. He became acquainted with various men whom he met at lecture.

It was whispered about that he was a good scholar, and likely to do credit to the house. He confirmed this impression by taking a first-class at moderations. Now, in those days, a first-class in mods. was a precious thing at Christ Church. There were many good scholars and clever men, but they seldom went beyond a second. There was a fatality in the matter, best explained on the theory of undergraduates' laziness. Men who would have been undoubted firsts at any other place were undoubted seconds at Christ Church. Consequently, his first-class gave Dudley large and almost undue credit. He developed a further distinction with the growing development of his muscles. His strong right arm was felt as an oar and as a cricketer. I am not certain which reputation is dearest to a college, to be high up in the schools, or high up on the river. Christ Church had been ignominiously bumped—in those days it was often ignominiously bumped

—but on one occasion, thanks mainly to Dudley, the bump was gloriously retrieved. His social position was achieved, and at college a social position is as much a feat as in the great world. The question with Mr. Dudley was this: How far would his college position help him when he went into the great world? Bohun was at once assured of a high position, and it was his ambition to make it very high indeed. It would be a great thing for Dudley if that could be the goal which with Bohun was the starting point.

If there was this difference between Bohun and Dudley, there was an equal difference, at the very least, between Dudley and Henry Percival. We have now the representative of another class at Oxford. Percival was a servitor. There has been a great deal of nonsense talked, and there is much misconception, concerning the position of Oxford servitors. There is a certain difference between what it is

now and what it was in the days of Dean Gaisford. There is a vast difference between what it is now and what it was a generation or two ago. My readers are probably acquainted with the history of George Whitefield, the great ecclesiastical orator of the eighteenth century. His mother kept the long, rambling Bell Inn, at Gloucester, that is immortalized in "Tom Jones." Whitefield lay on the bare boards, and acted as a common drawer and waiter. He had picked up some classical knowledge at the Crypt school, and in another condition of life would have gone to college and have done well. His mother accidentally fell in company with a Pembroke servitor.

The servitor told her that after his college expenses were made, he had cleared something—it was either a penny or a groat. Whitefield's mother saw an opening, and procured a similar position for her son. We are told that his habit of waiting at the Bell Inn proved of the

greatest use to him at college. No other servitor could rival him in the adroitness with which he managed the dishes, and this highly propitiated the favour of the commoners. At the present day, there is no visible distinction between the commoner and the servitor. The name still implies an odious distinction which probably will be soon abolished, and cannot be abolished too soon. A servitor, as a servitor, has ceased to be any object of contumely. According to what he really is himself, he finds or makes the society in which he moves.

I have known servitors of as gentle blood, liberal education, and refined manners as any of their University contemporaries. They have never been reminded, in the whole course of their career, of their position; they have mixed freely among the best men of their time; they have left the University to pursue a distinguished career in the world. But I have known servitors who have proved very

much the reverse of all this. There have been instances in which there has been nothing favourable in their antecedents or surroundings. The absence of much money —common to all servitors—has been accompanied by want of good breeding, want of education, of liberal tastes, and of good connections. In most cases a servitorship implies some sacrifice on the part of him who takes it; he accepts a position which socially is rather below him. But in the minority of cases which ought not to be allowed to occur, a servitorship is positively promotion. The servitor becomes a member of the University, which, in the ordinary course of things, he never would have been, and which none of his friends have been.

These are sometimes successful enough in mimicking the idleness and extravagance of richer men; but it is certainly no fault of the Oxford system that such men find themselves unpopular. Still the University works well even for the most un-

promising of her sons, and turns them out something much better than they were when they came to her.

Percival, then, was a servitor. His mother was a clergyman's widow, and he was one of a numerous family. He had been tossed about the world for troubled years as an usher in schools, and had had very hard lines. He had found in this servitorship a comparative haven of repose, and the first round of a social ladder which might conduct him to comparative eminence. He may be described by a series of negatives. He was quite unlikely to arrive at any reputation in the University. He was not, like Dudley, endowed with muscular power, so as to be honourably mentioned in the sporting newspapers. On the contrary, his *physique* was weak, and his bodily appearance contemptible. Neither would he ever obtain any reputation by his speeches at the *Union*, for he was "no orator, as Brutus is," Brutus in this case standing for the Honourable

Mr. Bohun. Unlike both Bohun and Dudley, he will never do himself much credit in the schools. His best years had been spent in teaching others, instead of in attaining knowledge for himself. But he possessed great sweetness of disposition, and an endearing amiability of character, together with a careful, conscientious industry, which would enable him to pass through the University respectably enough.

It will be observed of all these three, that we are not presenting them to our readers on their first introduction to University life. Percival is finishing his second year, while Bohun and Dudley are entering their third. We are not tracing the progress of the hobble-de-hoy into the University man. It so happens that each of these three is entering his twenty-first year, and they are almost as much men as they ever will be. They have passed the Rubicon of youth; they are now entering upon circumstances that will for ever

mould their character and shape their destinies.

It was, then, a certain memorable Monday in October, the first Monday of the term. It was an affluent, glorious day, a day when the notion of work was repulsive to Christ Church feelings. Indeed, there was no work done, and very little pretence of it. Men were reporting themselves to their tutors, and the tutors were completing their arrangements for lectures. There was a sort of little lévée going on in the rooms of each tutor. For the tutor had to shake hands with each new comer, to say something pleasant to him about his vacation, and to give a little advice about reading, or warning against non-reading. Men were going up the stairs, and men were going down the stairs, and Dudley found himself, with half a dozen others, in the rooms of Mr. Courtenay, the censor.

"And I hope, Lord Melfort, you will try and be more regular in your chapels this term. Last term, you will remember,

I was under the necessity of speaking to you several times on that subject."

Lord Melfort summoned up an appearance of decorous solemnity in his countenance, and assured Mr. Courtenay that nothing should exceed his regularity at chapel. And then, his red features relaxing from their temporary severity, he hurried down stairs.

"Ah, Mr. Dudley, glad to see you back again—hope you are quite well. Sit down a minute, please; I want to talk with you when I have finished with these gentlemen."

We will take a look at Mr. Courtenay while Dudley is waiting till he is at liberty. He was a tall, grave, monastic-looking man. He had that peculiar facial appearance which I imagine is almost peculiar to clergymen who have worked zealously and hard in their sacred profession. For Mr. Courtenay had come up from a country curacy of small value, but heavy duties, to discharge in his turn, the duty

of censor and tutor. The increased leisure would suit his weak health, and the better income his impoverished purse. There was, I say, an expression of anxiety and sadness about him common to those who have moved almost exclusively in paths but little illumined with the beauty and glory of human life. They are acquainted chiefly with only one phase of life, and that sombre familiarity has left a visible impress upon their features. They have been chiefly concerned with the sick bodies and sicklier souls of men. They spend much of their time in the abodes of sickness, poverty, guilt, and misery.

With the embodied conceptions of genius and art, with the lighter graces that adorn society, with the converse of brilliant women and illustrious men, with far reaching speculation and deep historical inquiry, and the latest advances of science, with the splendours of great capitals, and with the beauties or sublimities of celebrated scenery, they are most scantily familiar,

if, indeed, they can be said to be familiar in any sense. Their path lies on the hardest and most common track of human paths. Their acquaintance with life is but maimed and partial, and their views may be correspondingly defective. There will, however, be abundant amends, sooner or later, for *that.* If in this life they receive evil things, hereafter they shall receive good things.

"You have not seen the Alps," remarked some one to such a man.

"No," was the reply. "I intend to take it on my way *up.*"

Mr. Courtenay had worked hard even as one of these, till it became necessary that he should exchange his country post for this. I believe it was with a deep sigh that he gave up his visits to the sick, and his tendence of the poor, to read lectures on rhetoric, and prepare men for the schools. Still he felt he was living not unusefully, and was happy. And now these flowers of character that

had drooped and withered in the hard world, and beneath the unfeeling sun, began to expand in the grateful shade of the old academic bowers. The original investigation revived that had once distinguished the celebrated student, and the clear wit and playfulness of manner that had once belonged to the most charming and popular member of the common room.

"Well, Mr. Dudley, have you been reading much this vacation?"

"A little, sir."

"Been travelling about like the rest of the world?"

"I took a run into Switzerland, and did a little mountaineering."

"Climbed Mont Blanc, I suppose?"

"Not this time, sir. Charlecote, and Smith, and I managed Monte Rosa, but we were nearly killed coming back. Some fellow put a paragraph in the papers about it. Did you see it?"

"No, I did not. I seldom or never read the papers."

Hence, it will be remembered, Mr. Courtenay was like Earl Grey, who created great disgust in the public mind as the backer of the Reform Bill, by declaring that he never read the papers.

Hereupon Mr. Dudley told his anecdote, which did not materially differ from the general run of Alpine anecdotes. A rascally guide had furnished them with a bad rope. The rope broke, and Dudley and Smith were precipitated into a *crevasse*. They crept a little way under, and, by means of a ladder lowered to them, and the smaller man placing it on the larger man's shoulders, so got out.

"Very clever indeed, Mr. Dudley. We shall have you scaling the Matterhorn in time. It was a most merciful and providential deliverance, and I hope you took it as such."

Dudley unintelligibly murmured something decorous.

"And, now, let us talk about your reading, which this Alpine adventure has

interrupted. What have you been reading this Long, anything?"

"I went through 'The Republic' in a rough kind of way, before I went to Switzerland."

"Ah! I am glad you have done that. 'The Republic' is the backbone of Platonism. And what did you think of 'The Republic,' Mr. Dudley?"

Hereupon there ensued some talk on that heavy subject, Plato, and that still heavier subject, Aristotle. And then Mr. Courtenay invited Mr. Dudley to call any time or any number of evenings he liked to discuss these subjects. Some arrangements for lectures were then made, and Mr. Dudley was advised to attend the public lectures of the Professor of Greek. Finally, Mr. Courtenay asked if he was a member of the Undergraduate Association Auxiliary to the Bible Society; whereat Mr. Dudley was confused, for he had never heard hitherto of the existence of such a society. At this point, there was

an influx of more men, and the conversation terminated.

On the staircase, Dudley met Bohun.

"Come and have a glass of wine in my room after Hall," said Bohun.

"Grattered and flattified," replied Dudley, in the unmeaning slang which an absurd book, lately published, had widely disseminated and helped to increase.

Bohun contorted a grin. Contrary to common supposition, the best Oxford men talk exceedingly little slang.

Just then Percival came up.

"Ah, Percival, how do you do?" said Mr. Bohun; "I have not seen you since you dined with us at home at the commencement of the vacation. How have you spent the summer?"

"Travelling with a pupil," said Percival.

"Come and take a glass of wine with me after Hall. Do you know Dudley, the man who did so much better than us all at moderations? Dudley, let me

introduce Percival, a friend of mine and my father's."

And so the three men knew each other, whose lots in life we shall endeavour to trace out.

"But it's a very odd thing," said Dudley to himself, as he went out beneath Tom Gate, "that Bohun and Percival should be as intimate as they seem to be."

CHAPTER III.

It is Good for a Man to Bear the Yoke in his Youth.

HOW was it that the aristocratic Bohun was on such terms of familiar intimacy with Percival? This was a question on which Dudley pondered without much result. He never exactly knew the reason, but it shall be unfolded at once to our readers. It helps to show —though surely such a demonstration is not needed—how the complex tissue of human life is woven, and one man's life wondrously dovetailed into the lives of others.

In a famous minster, that ought to be a cathedral, and yet is not, since there

is no bishop, was the Rev. Dr. Percival, a canon. He would not envy the canon of any regular cathedral, let me say one with which all the public are familiar—Barchester. For the revenues of his chapter were good, nay, exceeding good. For Dr. Percival flourished in golden days, before pluralities were denounced, or ecclesiastical commissioners invented. What came freely was freely spent. If Dr. Percival, by the purest hap-hazard, chanced to ask a visitor to take "pot-luck," that visitor would surely know that he was extremely lucky. For there would be a clear soup, good fish, flesh, and fowl, game that had perhaps been sent over from one of the mighty of the earth with His Royal Highness's compliments, and such Madeira and port as are fast becoming traditions of the past.

That canonry, and the fat country living of Foot-in-Clover, situated in the adjacent county, made the middle-aged Dr. Percival a rubicund and prosperous

man. He had one cause of anxiety alone. The income of two or three thousand a year was balanced by a precisely similar outgoing. There was a wife and a flock of little ones, and these always cause anxiety to a man who has only a life-interest in his possessions. Save and insure was obvious advice; but, like most obvious advice, it looks very pretty, but is rather impracticable. A man in a particular style of living never likes to alter that style. The canon hoped to provide for his children, as they successively grew up, by his influence or his means. And when the daughters are well married, and the boys well placed, it would be easier to gather together some little fund in declining years, that would prove a substantial *memento* of the old people.

These things might have been. But Canon Percival did not count on the presence of the blind Fury with the abhorred shears. She came and cut the thread of his life and the thread of his hopes.

An inflammation of the lungs, if not suddenly, yet with little warning, carried him off. His family, when all outstanding liabilities were paid, owned a balance at the old county bank literally of a few shillings only. We are all acquainted with such sad and familiar tales. It so happened that the widow had a little fortune—a very little fortune in her own right—which produced a revenue of £33, deducting income tax. The eldest girl, only sixteen, became a governess. The eldest boy, only fifteen, became a pupil teacher in a school. This expression means that he paid nothing, was taught little, and spent most of his time in teaching others. A retreat was found for the widow, which gave her a roof over her head, and more than doubled the extent of her scanty means.

When I knew the little village of Bromley, near London, it was one of the pleasantest spots in all that pleasant county of Kent. It was a land of green

lanes and pleasant fields, comparatively remote from London, though you might see the never-varying cloud overhanging its site, and with sharpened ear just detect the hardly distinguishable murmur of its sounds. All that is altered now. There are now two railway stations in the village or close by, and streets and rows of houses are springing up, and there is a morning exodus and an evening inundation of clerks and shopkeepers. But I trust one domain is still extant, one precinct yet hallowed.

In the earlier part of the reign of Charles II., it was the very year of the Great Plague or the Great Fire, a certain pious prelate, Bishop Warner, built and endowed a college for the widows of poor, pious clergymen. I like to think of that good deed which, in the long lapse of years, has done and is doing so much good. We speak of the days of Charles II. as very wicked days. I am afraid they were days of very bad men and

women. But has it ever struck you how that, too, was an age marvellously prolific of really good men and women, saints of holy and blameless converse, abounding in good deeds of sacrifice and mercy? If we look much into the annals of religion and charity in this age, we see that there is a heavy *per contra* to set off against cabal, conspiracy, and Popish plot.

You entered the college by an iron gateway in those days, and passed through two quadrangles, surrounded with groves, flower gardens, and lawns. Here the shattered gods of the ancient hearths were reinstated, and, like the mimic Troy, which recalled the glories of ancient Ilium, the comforts and grandeur of former vicarial abodes were faintly reproduced. Here the widow consoled herself, amid her ruined fortunes, by the heavenly thoughts of an abiding home and reunited friends. She devoted herself to the care of her three younger children, while the elder ones

went forth to struggle with the world; and when tired of the unequal contest, they felt there was still a home nest to which they could retreat with weary wing.

The struggle was a hard one. So at least the elder boy, Charles Percival, found out. For two years he continued at the eminent school kept by Mr. Fisher. It was a very popular preparatory school; and the proprietor had the great tact of making his school very popular, so far as any school can be rendered so, with the boys themselves. He was a man who with difficulty had taken an ordinary degree, no scholar, and not very much of a gentleman; but he was a keen man of business, and looked upon his school as a mercantile speculation, by which he certainly succeeded in making a great deal of money. His blandness with pupils and parents were balanced by his harshness to dependents. Charles Percival was made to feel keenly all that acute suffering which is traditionally associated with the notion of

an usher of a school. Even had he been under a very different kind of man, under outward circumstances much more favourable, I am afraid his lot must have been a hard one. He had no salary, and he could not bear to draw upon his mother for the supply of his few simple wants.

All this had a very depressing effect on the boy's mind, and for my own part I cannot but think it very sad when the bright morning of youth is thus overcast with clouds. It was in after years a wonder to Charles Percival how he got through the sorrowful time. For a year and a half he continued at this school, and then bethought himself how his estate might be bettered.

He was now in his eighteenth year, well grown, tolerably educated, with a certain amount of scholastic experience to which pedagogues attach more value than to scholarship, but somewhat spiritless, somewhat lacking in energy and purpose. He had suffered enough to crush a more elas-

tic spirit. He had been trying to obtain a tutor's place or mastership in some private school to which some salary would be attached, but hitherto without success, and he felt very downhearted indeed.

This is not an uncommon case, I am sure. There is many a noble-spirited, well-educated lad, who suffers thus keenly. and, as we should deem it, unworthily. There is something wonderful and mysterious in this. We must believe that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. Let such take faith and courage. The eye of a loving Father is over all, and even thus early He works his gracious works of discipline and guidance. How many who have gained a quiet haven, and pass their lives in honour, usefulness, and happiness, have passed through strange scenes and over troubled waters in their youth. And a gracious Providence—let all such cling to this simple, early faith—watches in kindly love over those who are still little ones, evermore evoking good out

of evil, strengthening them to endure, and leading them by a way which they know not, a way wiser, and better, and happier than could be any way of their own.

It was a wild March evening. The day was Wednesday, a half-holiday at the school. Percival had taken advantage of the half-holiday to come to town to see if anything could be done with the school-agents. The school-agents had sent him out to Paddington to see a gentleman who required an instructor for his son.

The Paddingtonian was not greatly impressed by Percival's personal appearance. In truth, our poor young friend in those days carried the shabby-genteel to a very fine point indeed. Charles always tried to be very neat. His hat and coat were always brushed to perfection; but when the nap is gone, and the cloth is threadbare, perhaps intense brushing only heightens these radical imperfections. His gloves were palpably darned, probably by himself. But his boots admitted water,

which was the more to be regretted as the evening was beginning to set in very damp. The Paddingtonian viewed with severe suspicion both the hat and the boots, and—poor Percival !—neither his head nor his heels yielded any satisfaction, so far as their coverture was concerned. Whereupon the gentleman said he would consider of it, and if he had anything to say to him, he would write on some future day. Percival rightly construed this as a negative; but he was so inured to disappointment, that disappointment had ceased to sting. Without another word he silently withdrew.

When he came into the streets he found that real March weather was abroad. The large snow-flakes were largely falling, and the wind fiercely charged down the rows of tall houses as if to clear the streets of all human tenantry. His funds did not admit of cab or omnibus; they amounted to just one shilling and sixpence, which will pay his fare by coach

back to the school, in the little town near London. He hurried on quickly, but soon began to hang out signals of distress. That unfortunate boot leaked greatly. It was impossible to persevere against such tempestuous weather; better wait till the violence of the storm had subsided.

He looked around. He was now traversing one of the great palaced squares of western London. No shop, or public house, or poor man's dwelling was in sight. How is it that in tempestuous weather we claim the hospitality of shelter from a poor man, but never like to do so from a rich? Ruddy gleams of light came through crimson curtains here and there, telling the wanderer of wealthy people, warmly clothed and comfortably housed. The only near refuge was beneath some doorway. Close by was a stately portal. Supported on columns, it retreated to some little extent, and offered a tolerable shelter. "No Chris-

tian would refuse standing-room to a dog on such a night as this," thought Percival to himself, as he went up the step, and instinctively selected the corner where he would be best protected from the wind.

He had only been there five minutes when a Hansom sharply rattled up. The occupant sprang lightly out. He took out his latch-key while paying the driver, and in a few seconds was applying it to the door. He gave a quick glance to the figure that stood before it, and was preparing to withdraw.

"Ah, have you rung? Do you want to see any one?" hastily exclaimed the stranger.

"No one, thank you," returned Percival. "I was only taking refuge here for a few minutes out of the storm."

"Why, yes, I'm afraid it's going to be a very bad night," said the stranger.

Percival was about to descend the step and face it, nevertheless.

"But you've got no umbrella, my good

friend. Come indoors a few minutes, and sit down. What no? I really think you had better."

A friendly grasp was laid on his shoulder, and Percival found himself within the hall.

It was an act of simple, kindly courtesy. He who did it in another age and land might have performed the simple, kindly deed of the Good Samaritan. He never had reason to repent of it, and the other often had reason to rejoice over it.

It was, in Percival's eyes, a magnificent hall. He was a little startled when he first entered; for a lion's skin was laid down as a mat, and he first saw the elevated head of the creature as if *couchant* to spring. There was a covered chair, evidently the box of a powdered porter, but the magnificent animal had disappeared in the lower regions to gratify the mundane appetites which he possessed, even in common with school ushers. In

the full light, the stranger looked down on Percival's face for a moment, in a slightly irresolute manner. Observe, he looked at the *face*, and not at the boots or the hat. And then he opened a side-door.

"Perhaps you will be so good as to step in here."

The room was a library. A good fire was burning in the grate. Three sides of the room were well lined with books. There was a fine painting over the mantel-piece and some portraits, a single marble bust, which Percival recognized as a bust of Canning.

"Have you seen the evening paper? Here is the 'Sun.' Read it in that arm-chair till the storm blows over."

The boy did as he was told. He settled into the chair, and his furtive eye stole beyond the newspaper to the book-shelves. His host settled down to a writing-table, opened one or two letters that were awaiting him, and commenced

writing. Presently he quietly got up and took down some books, and having made his references, he walked to the window and, raising the blind, looked out.

"Still very wet. You will not be able to go immediately. Let me offer you a glass of sherry and a biscuit."

It was nearly ten and Percival had dined in the middle of the day. He was hungry and exhausted, and had sense to see that it would be great nonsense to decline the proffered hospitality.

"Thank you. You are very kind indeed. I dined early and shall be very glad."

Biscuits and wine were brought. Keen eyes watched the young man—keen eyes, but at the same time kind and merciful. For the host was one, who, rich, had made himself acquainted with the ways of poverty. Observation and quick instinct had shown him first that shelter and then that refreshment would be welcome, and the same faculties taught him that a little

further sympathy and kindness would not be misplaced.

"And now, my young friend, what is your name, and what are you doing in the world. Tell me a little of your history."

It was said suddenly but very kindly. Percival felt the tears gather to his eyes, but he did not care to show any emotion. He replied quickly—

"My name is Percival. I am the orphan of a clergyman, and an usher in a school."

Not a bad guess thought his interrogator to himself. Fancied he was something of the kind.

"Percival — Percival," he continued aloud. "What Percival was that? It is a name I know very well."

"My father was Canon of N—— and Rector of M——," said the youth.

"Dr. Percival, the Canon," said the stranger. "I remember him perfectly well, and on several occasions I have

been in his company. But, my boy, I should have thought my old acquaintance, the Canon, would have contrived something better for you than the ushership of a school. Why you are quite a big fellow, fit to go to college, and I daresay have read all Sophocles through."

Percival answered quickly, "If my father had lived, I had been intended to go to college. My mother now fears it is quite impossible. I am sorry to say that I have read very little Sophocles, for I have been obliged to be always teaching little boys."

"I have no doubt you know quite enough for Oxford; but I am afraid your father did not leave you so well off as I might suppose from his position. Come, tell us all about it."

Thus kindly urged, Charles Percival told his simple story, in which he could hardly suppress altogether an occasional sob. His auditor listened attentively, only interposing an occasional question. When he had

concluded, his new friend dropped a few expressions of sympathy and goodwill, which were inexpressibly soothing. There was a gleam of romance in the young man's disposition, and he wondered whether he was haply raising up for himself some powerful friend.

"Come and write down your name and address here, and also your mother's address," said his entertainer.

After this was concluded: "And now tell me how old you are, Mr. Percival?".

"I am seventeen and a half, sir."

"Only seventeen and a half, and they set you to teach boys; you are only a boy yourself. I daresay you are not above receiving a schoolboy's tip, any more than other boys as big as yourself. You will really do me a favour if you will let me tip you." This was said with a good humour and sweetness of expression which won the lad's heart; he had fully learned the uses of money, and the three bright golden sovereigns pressed

into his hand were a little fortune to him.

"I think the snow has pretty well stopped now, and a cab will soon take you to your point of departure."

There was just a hint to go, perhaps, in the expression, and Percival took the hint, as he had now the means of locomotion.

Some days after this the following letter reached Percival:—

"My dear Sir,

"I write to you at the request of Lord Bohun, with whom you spent some little time the other evening at his house in Portman Square. Lord Bohun would be glad if he can in any degree assist you in going to the University, and has asked me to talk over matters with you to see what can be done. Will you kindly favour me with your company on Saturday, to lunch, at two.

"Yours faithfully,

"CHARLES DELAMERE."

Charles Percival recognized the name as that of a well-known and active London clergyman. He built up some ambitious castles in the air. Would Lord Bohun be at the lunch he wondered. Would he send him to Oxford and allow him a handsome income there, out of which he could allow his mother a handsome sum? Would he, through Lord Bohun, obtain an introduction to the best London society, and have a brilliant career before him? Such were the airy imaginations which floated through his brain, though he strove to modify or repress them.

It was well he did so. Such expectations would be immensely exaggerated. Percival called on Mr. Delamere, whom he found a grave, kindly, but worried clergyman. Percival asked him whether he was likely to see Lord Bohun again, a question at which Mr. Delamere looked a little surprised. He said that the Earl was always very busy, and that it was

scarcely likely that he would think it necessary to see Mr. Percival again. He added, somewhat coldly, that it was not at all uncommon for Lord Bohun to render a measure of assistance to deserving young men on their way through college. This was very prosaic. A prosaic lunch followed, and then they adjourned to the study, where Mr. Delamere put Percival through the prosaic work of construing some Greek and Latin, and answering some questions in grammar.

When this was done, Mr. Delamere said that it appeared to him highly probable that he might obtain some servitorship or Bible clerkship at Oxford. He could not do better than try at Christ Church. The new dean had abolished all the odious class distinctions, and the position would very precisely suit a youth of such circumstances. He or Lord Bohun would write to the dean on his behalf. But it was not necessary to exert any influence. If he could pass a tolerably stiff examina-

tion, he would be pretty safe, and his history would be no disadvantage to him. He would find that a servitorship would be an academical subsistence to him. But Lord Bohun knew that there were many unavoidable expenses in addition to this, and he would have great pleasure in allowing him sixty pounds a year for four years. He added that Lord Bohun had made some inquiries respecting him and his family which had been quite satisfactory.

Although things were done on a humbler scale than his boyish imagination had suggested, Percival was quite alive to the real kindness and munificence of this proposal. He himself bore the glad news down to Bromley, where he found that Lord Bohun had only a day or two before called upon his mother, as a mark of attention to the widow of an old acquaintance. After some delay, a servitorship at Christ Church was happily obtained. Earl Bohun wrote him a kind letter, in which

he said he was sure it was unnecessary to warn him against extravagance or indolence, or to express his conviction that he would do his best to obtain for himself some credit. He hoped he should see something of him.

It was a wonderful change for the young man to find himself away from Mr. Fisher's, and comfortably established, if not in spacious, at least in neat and convenient rooms. The cards and circulars of obsequious tradesmen were rained down upon him as upon others. If he had been so minded, he might, with an empty pocket, have taken his walks abroad, and have sent into his rooms wines, pictures, jewellery, fine furniture, etc., to the value of hundreds of pounds. To him, as to various others, it was a sudden transfer to absolute opulence. To many young heads this elevation in the world, these splendid possibilities are too much. The first term is a dangerous time. It often entails unhappiness for many ensuing

terms, for many ensuing years. Percival had too much principle to be dishonest, and too much good sense to draw large draughts on the golden but uncertain future. Lord Bohun's kindness had, in fact, effectually shielded him from the temptation or the necessity.

Percival had now passed through two years of college life. Those two years from eighteen to twenty—years moreover spent at college—surely they achieve more and leave their mark more surely than any other two years. The boy has become a man. He has become learned in the world's way. Let us hope that he has heaped up some knowledge, and, moreover, has obtained the faculty of easily applying his mind to any description of knowledge. So far as Percival himself was concerned, we do not anticipate that any very brilliant career lies before him. He possesses no very conspicuous talents, and his attainments are quite limited. But I have a notion that,

to a considerable extent, university distinctions do not so much represent intellectual as moral power. To read regularly, patiently, and attentively, is something of which many very clever men are absolutely incapable. A university career is a race in which the tortoise has a very good chance of winning something good. At present Percival had only distinguished himself by a modest third at Moderations, wherein Dudley had taken a first, and Bohun a second.

As we have said, Percival was not a solitary instance of Lord Bohun's kindness at the universities. But it so happened that he saw more of his kind friend and his family than might be the case with others. For Lord Bohun's second son proceeding to Christ Church about this time, his father desired him to see something of Percival. Young Bohun entertained only a languid admiration for his father's proverbial generosity of character, and did not feel himself

called upon to cultivate any close degree of intimacy. But he thought it proper to ask him to a breakfast or a wine once a term, and to climb up those lofty stairs after him. His father generally asked young Percival to dinner once or twice in the season at the ancestral hall at Portman Square, and of course they should be on tolerable terms together.

And in this manner it might have been explained to Mr. Dudley's satisfaction how he found Percival at the Honourable Mr. Bohun's wine.

CHAPTER IV.

At Godstowe.

IT was a beautiful day, one of pure Italian beauty, the reliquary grace of the vanishing summer. As Dudley looked around, two courses divided the swift mind. The academical ambition and the aquatic taste were in collision. They were beginning to be very often in collision now, and like the two horsemen in Burger's ballad, whispered alternately in his ear. It would be a step in advance to grapple with a set of knotty passages in the Republic. On the other hand, it would be sinful to lose so fine a day "poring over miserable books." He would have a lazy day upon the water, get some bread and cheese and beer for lunch at

Godstowe, and be back in time for hall and Bohun's wine.

A pleasant walk, leaving the railway stations in the rear, brought him to the boats. It was not the deep swift course from Oxford to Ifley, partly crowded with boats even at that early hour, where there might be some necessity to parade his strength and skill. He took the upper reach of the river, where broad and shallow it skirted a vast meadow, reminding one of the interminable meadows of Holland. Dudley assumed the Indian and paddled about in a canoe. His only difficulty was to keep to the bed of the river, and avoid being entangled by the American weeds, that are almost choking up the stream. There was a serene stillness reigning everywhere around. In the stillness of wind and wave he moved listlessly about. In about half an hour the sound of an oar broke the silence. There was a bend in the river which hid the neighbouring boats from sight. A

few smart strokes impelled him further.

It was a young lady rowing in a boat. There was much grace but at the same time not much skill in the management of her craft. Dudley caught a glance as he rapidly shot past. The face was upraised in what appeared like a little mutual curiosity. A dark handsome face of somewhat Spanish type, oval and regular; beyond this, small white hands and brilliant eyes. Thus much our undergraduate noted, and also the attire, the simple morning attire of a country young lady, the broad brim of a Spanish hat shadowing a profusion of dark curls. It was rather clever in him to take in all these details in about thirty seconds. This was at the bend of the river hard by the ruins of the nunnery where the Rose of the World buried her sorrow, and most familiar to Oxford men are those priory ruins, and the story of fair Rosamond.

A minute after and his boat was close by the grounds of the Godstowe inn.

Oxford men will remember that little inn very well. The out-door seats, the sanded skittle-ground, the broad dark pool of water, the massive foliage, the rustic bridge, the ancient ruins, and within doors the neat rooms, and the excellent fare.

Our undergraduate did after his kind. He called for some beer and lighted a pipe, and strolled about. Soon he became aware of an elderly couple standing by the brink of the water, and looking thereon with some amazement and a little anxiety intermixed.

"The silly girl to lose her oar. She will never get it again."

"She will certainly upset herself if she tries."

"Now she has it. No; another miss. She will lose her head if she turns round that way."

Dudley recognised the young lady he

had so recently passed. In the elderly couple he thought, correctly enough, that he saw the father and mother. A fresh looking hearty man of the better yeoman class, or a grade beyond; the mother, with that matronly expression of kindness, comfort, and pleasant maternal care that has its own peculiar grace.

"We had better tell some of the people of the inn to go out and fetch her back."

Dudley drew nearer and raised his hat. "I shall be very happy, madam, to go out and recover the young lady's oar for her. This is my boat at your feet."

In a few minutes he had regained the oar and presented it to the young lady, volunteering a little advice concerning its better management.

"Well, young gentleman," said the father, as he handed her ashore, "it was very kind of you to put yourself to all this trouble. I suppose you belong to the colleges in Oxford town?"

Dudley replied that he did.

"I suppose you be all regular water-rats, begging your pardon, yonder. Now, though I have lived in Oxfordshire, man and boy well nigh forty years, I have never, regular-like, been through the colleges, and don't even get to the markets more than once or twice a year; it's all out of the way of Dónnington, but having had a real good harvest this time, for which the Lord be thanked"—here the hat was reverentially raised—"for a treat we came up to Oxford and stayed last night at the 'Star.' Drat it, but they know how to make out a bill there. Never mind, with wheat what it is a bushel, there's no call to grumble. We came on to see the ruinations here," smiling at his attempt at verbal humour; "it's a pretty place, sure enough; but to my mind Donnington is quite as pretty, and so some of the artist folk think, as one may suppose, judging by the picture they had up in London of it, come last May, two years ago."

Here the worthy man ceased, and his women folk appeared to think that it was time he should do so. The young beauty was impatiently tapping her little foot with the tip of her parasol. She evidently did not think that her father's conversation was quite up to the Oxford mark.

"I have several times caught a glimpse of Donnington from the railway," said Dudley, "and thought it very pretty. You have an old church there, have you not? and if I remember aright, very good fishing."

"You may well say that, young man," said the elder; "as good fishing I guess as any at Godstowe, though they say it's none so bad here."

"The church is very interesting, and very much admired," said the mother.

"It is Norman and early English," said the young lady; and observing that her father and possibly the young stranger were looking at her a little quizzically, she coloured, and added, "not that I know

very much about the difference between the two."

"Did you hear tell, sir, ever," said the mother, "of a Mr. Jones among the young gentlemen at the colleges?"

"What Jones?" said Dudley; "I know of four, five, six. There's Jones of our place, and there's Long Jones at Corpus, and Short Jones at Lincoln, and one or two others."

"Oh, no, none of them. This Mr. Jones, he is our clergyman's great friend, and must have left some years before you could have been old enough to go to college. But happen you have heard of him?"

"Of what college was he?" asked Dudley, anxious to conciliate.

"Well, that's more than I can tell you now. Mr. Larpent," added the lady, slightly raising her voice, "have you ever heard tell which was young Jones's college?"

Mr. Larpent applied his hand to his

head in a meditative manner, but nothing came of it.

"Oh, mamma," said the girl, "you are very hard upon the gentleman. If we cannot recollect either Mr. Jones's year or his college, and it must have been before his time, we cannot expect that this gentleman should know anything about him."

"That's one for you, old lady," said Mr. Larpent, addressing his wife. "I think that's them coming to us from the house, Rose. Just step forward and see if it's to say dinner is ready." Rose moved slowly forward to arrest any message, and at this point there was a little whispering between the worthy couple.

"We are going to pick a bit of dinner, sir," said Mr. Larpent, rather reddening, and taking off his hat; "we shall be very pleased if you will do as we do—if so be it is not too early for you."

It certainly was early. Only two hours ago Mr. Dudley had assisted at the groan-

ing table of an Oxford breakfast party. He would naturally have declined such an invitation. A glance at the pretty girl quickly decided him, and with thanks he accepted the kindly-meant invitation.

It was a simple, substantial repast. Eels fresh from the river, mutton with the properties of a Southdown, a tart, and some bread and cheese, with home-brewed ale. Mr. Larpent called for a bottle of sherry, apologizing for its not being champagne, and saying, with a grin, that farmers must wait for better times. He informed Dudley that he was not exactly a farmer, but had been, now many years ago, in business; but a matter of a hundred acres having been left him by will when he was still young, he had determined to take it into his own hands. It would do him no good to be cheated by a bailiff, and his wife thought it would be best for his health and amusement if he turned a bit of a farmer himself.

"And it's a pretty place, the Grange,"

he continued, "as you will find when you come to see us, as I hope you will. I could give you a good glass of port wine there, and for the matter of that I would do so here, only I am afraid they are not likely to have it."

During the meal, Dudley, without appearing to do so too much, directed a great deal of his conversation to the young lady. She had much vivacity, which immensely helped her pretty looks. It has been well said, that however the case may vary with men, every woman is naturally a lady. Rosalind Larpent was such under certain unavoidable limitations. She had lived, she gave Dudley to understand, all her life in a provincial town. It was clear that even there she had had only second-rate society. She was ready to talk, and talked a great deal, while her parents listened admiringly to their daughter. An Oxford gownsman was a phenomenon in Miss Larpent's existence—one on which she was disposed

to look very favourably, and to accredit with a great many of her romantic conceptions—one of a mysterious society concerning which the Oxfordshire country people have their own cycle of legends. Dudley told her a good deal of the great world, and Rosalind's acquaintance with the great world was absolutely nothing. She went to the concerts which were now and then given in the assembly room of their chief inn at Donnington, and she had recently witnessed the glorious sight of the Donnington illuminations on the occasion of the peace with Russia. But Mr. Dudley had as a matter of real, live, personal experience been more than once to the Royal Italian Opera, and more than once had traversed the Boulevards of Paris, and had seen, with the eyes of the flesh, the Empress Eugénie. When he had satisfied feminine curiosity respecting the Empress, he told them of his own Alpine adventures, and the marvellous escape on Monte Rosa. Furthermore, he

glorified himself and delighted his hearers with other little personal particulars, how he and some friends had baulked the proctors last term, and how he had travelled in a railway carriage the other day a hundred miles together with the Lord Chancellor, who on that occasion was divested of his robes of office, and discoursed like an ordinary mortal on the state of the weather and the prospects of the harvest. And Mrs. Larpent declared, that despite the story about the proctors, she had no doubt he was a very proper young gentleman, who took steadily to his books, and would one day do himself credit. This gave occasion to Mr. Dudley to admit—in fact a rather pointed question was put to him—that he had taken a first-class at Moderations, which, of course, to the simple people very much enhanced the favourable light in which he had shewn himself, and placed him at the slightest possible distance from the Chancellor aforesaid.

Rosalind declared herself passionately fond of reading. They had not many books at home, but the Donnington Mechanics' Institution was very handy and convenient, and books were exchanged every Tuesday and Thursday. They talked a great deal about books; but I am afraid the literary conversation of our quartette would be hardly worth repetition. Dudley asked the young lady whether she read any French, and Rose rather hesitated about her answer.

"I am sure, my dear Rose," said her mother, "you know your French very well. Your papa and I have never spared any expense in your education. You learned French at Miss Crewker's Seminary till you were fifteen; and I am sure during the last five years you have often done something at it."

Dudley gathered from this that the young lady was twenty. Not noticing this, he inquired whether she liked French books.

"I like French novels very much. I like George Sand. You must not suppose, however, that I read them in French. I might if we had them; but we have very few French books. But 'Consuelo' and the 'Countess of Rudolstadt' came out in the Railway Library—the green-covered books, you know."

"George Sand is not generally a favourite author with ladies," said Mr. Dudley, a little gravely. "Just now he is writing a really beautiful story in the the 'Revue des deux Mondes,' called *L'Homme de Neige*. Do you ever see the 'Revue,' Miss Larpent?"

Poor Rose had never even heard of it. She might do her French exercises correctly, and know all her verbs by heart, but of French literature and history she knew absolutely nothing. I am afraid this is true of many young ladies infinitely better educated than poor Rose.

"But," added Rose *naïvely*, "I did not like them very much. I like the stories

in the 'London Journal' much better."

This was rather a severe blow for Mr. Dudley. He asked if she liked poetry, and was of course told that she passionately adored it.

"Do you read Tennyson?"

"A little. Is not 'Locksley Hall' wonderful?

'Comrades, leave me here a little, while, as yet, 'tis early morn.'

But I like Longfellow much better; oh, don't you? 'Excelsior,' isn't that glorious?"

Mr. Dudley had some literary taste, and that literary taste was offended. He did not understand the young lady preferring Longfellow to Tennyson, and reading the "London Journal" and George Sand in a railway cover. She must be deeply tainted with the vulgarity that belonged to her worthy parents. Nevertheless, she was unquestionably a pretty creature. There was intellect in her eye,

although that intellect would be all the better for a little cultivation at the hands of a superior Oxford undergraduate. And then Mr. Dudley, thinking perhaps that the conversation on his part was becoming a little pointed, directed his conversation to the mother, who presently rose and left her goodman to his pipe.

The pipe was smoked under the influence of what Mr. Larpent called "summat hot," and presently the ostler brought round his chaise. The chaise stamped him at once as belonging to the gig order of respectability. It was a four-wheeler, with a very good horse. Mr. Larpent asked if he would like a drive. The vacant seat was by the side of Rosalind, so he assented. The little carriage rattled gallantly on over the vile Oxfordshire roads. The ruts and the mud-heaps were quite sufficient to prevent that day's ride from becoming a life's romance. There was not a parish they passed through that did not deserve to be indicted at

Quarter Sessions. If the lands belong to the colleges—and in some measure they do—the colleges ought to keep them in better order. The young people, however, continued to be mutually very agreeable. Rosalind Larpent explained to Dudley that at six or seven miles' distance there was a station, and from that railway station a train would carry him back to Oxford, without having long to wait for it. Dudley thought that all this was a genuine adventure, and he liked it very much. Hitherto his life had not been fertile in adventure; had the seven miles been seventy, he would have gone blindly on for the mere vagary of the thing. When, however, the little roadside station was reached, Mr. Larpent stopped the chaise for him, and with hearty expressions of kindness, and a warm invitation to Donnington, took his leave. Dudley found, a little to his dudgeon, that he had three-quarters of an hour to wait. The village was at a

distance from the station, and the waiting had to be done in a little waiting-room. Dudley essayed to be affable with the railway clerk, but that official was of a non-communicative disposition; so he sat with his eye doggedly fixed on the clock, waiting for 5.17 p.m.

CHAPTER V.

Bohun's Wine and the Union.

THE company did not guarantee the regularity of their trains. This was a parliamentary, and so it did not much matter that it was nearly half an hour after its time. Dudley took his seat in an empty first-class carriage, and thought of pretty Rosalind. He was a boating man, however, and may therefore be excused if, despite his excellent lunch, he also thought of dinner. Neither cogitation lasted long, for almost directly he was amid the lights and noises of the Oxford station. There is Parliamentary legislation to the effect that undergraduates are not allowed to travel at

their own will and pleasure on the line, legislation tolerably inoperative. He was too late for hall. That, however, did not signify. He would dine at a pastry-cook's; in fact, there was a regular dinner club at one of the pastry-cook's.

In those days there was a great deal of dissatisfaction in the undergraduate mind respecting dinners in hall. Solid beef and pudding did not meet the notions of the undergraduate mind. That mind required to be nourished with wine and *entrées*. Under this idea, a dozen men or so, "with power to add to their number," used to meet together to dine, and Dudley had enrolled himself as an occasional member. I think Mr. Dudley would have done better to have rested content with the college commons, without falling into this extravagance. It was all very well for Mr. Cumrae, who was the heir to illimitable riches, and had even now five thousand a year of his own, to refuse to

consider himself as dined without claret and pheasant. But what are we to think of Mr. Trenmar? I know his father, the Honourable and Reverend Augustus Trenmar, had a substantial family living, but nevertheless, to maintain his son at Christ Church, the family made certain sacrifices. The well-spread dessert was specifically given up, and his sister's purchases in silks and jewellery were nothing worth mentioning. I certainly think the son might have spent the family savings better than on game and light wines, in the days when Mr. Gladstone's budget had not made light wines procurable at a low rate.

Dudley was in time for some dinner with this club of Heluos. To him it was chiefly a social matter. Each Heluo was rich born and rich bred, and belonged to an expensive set. Dudley was keenly finding out all the advantages and disadvantages of a social set. He, a commoner, and of a race of commoners, felt

a little foolish vanity at being seated between a brace of honourables. Mr. Bohun's wine was mentioned, and the honourables, with the affluent Cumrae and half a dozen others, were going there. So the dinner party, almost as a body, adjourned for their wine to Bohun's rooms in Peekwater.

It was a great wine, a crush affair, to which some two hundred men had been invited. Mr. Bohun had cleared off most of his visiting list at once.

Indeed, that large assembly of young fellows represented very completely the current Oxford society of the day. Some were freshmen, a few of whom were happy boys just released from the trammels of school or home, and had a childish delight in the cakes, sweets, and strong wine. Through various strata you worked your way up to the uppermost crust of the University system. Here was the latest Christ Church man, who had achieved his seat in Parliament, the last

who had taken orders, the last who had taken an out-college fellowship, and some young Masters of Arts in whom the magisterial element had apparently not yet superseded the undergraduate element. If we could go from group to group, catch the tone and listen to the items of the talk, we should gain a not inadequate idea of Oxford society, and of the representative youth of England. And what a curious mixture that talk was! Here it was the gross ignorance, the sheer inexperience, the vague speculation of ardent and rather silly youths; and here again morsels of wit and wisdom, of table and travel talk that might glitter in the productions of the best writers of dialogue.

Taking up, the other day, a series of discourses by an American divine, addressed to American students, I find the following citation: "Let him," says the biographer of Bacon—I do not know what biographer the American writer means,

certainly not Mr. Ellis—"let him who is fond of indulging in dreamlike existence go to Oxford, and stay there; let him study this magnificent spectacle, the same under all aspects, with its mental twilight tempering the glare of noontide, or mellowing the shadowy moonlight; let him wander in her sylvan suburbs, or linger in her cloistered halls; but let him not catch the din of scholars or teachers, or dine or sup with them, or speak a word to any of the privileged inhabitants; for if he does, the spell will be broken, the poetry and the religion gone, and the palace of enchantment will melt from his embrace into thin air." There is a manifest injustice involved in these words, but it may be as well to know what the Americans think of us. There are still "evenings worthy of the gods" among "the privileged inhabitants" which may well explain any "illusion" and all the best traditions. This evening at Bohun's might do much to exhibit a refutation.

I must also admit this: there would be much to justify the charge. The men were grouped together according to a system of Bohun's, who prided himself on his skill in arranging his guests, and found themselves in their customary cliques and knots, in which at once they took up the thread of old conversations and discussed their usual schemes. As a grave man I do not care to reproduce the frivolity and nonsense, not without a dash of immorality, perhaps of profanity, that pervaded a good deal of the talk—a talk of horses and rats, stories of baulked proctors and prostrated bull dogs, shewing an acquaintance not only with local, but with the details of London and Paris vice. It is not necessary to reproduce that "not convenient talk." The talkers are in the days of their ignorance. God bring them hereafter into his light and love. They are sowing their wild oats. But when will they finish reaping what they are sowing? Such distempered grain has an awkward

habit of producing every now and then, when least looked for, some pestilent harvest.

Let us hasten to say that the men whose conversation exhibited these characteristics formed a decided minority of the company. It might be observed that for a clever man and a scholar, Mr. Dudley was a little too much mixed up with those who were in the main as unintellectual people as you could wish not to see. He contributed several items to the conversation, one of which may bear quotation:

"I heard a good story this morning, which I will tell you fellows. Old Blogue, the senior Proctor——"

Sundry deep groans greeted this mention of the name of their natural enemy.

"He was the man, you know," said Dudley, "who set at Mods the question, 'Prove that prepositions do not govern cases.' His notion was, you know," he

continued, explanatorily, "prepositions are not prepositions at all, but only old cases of defunct nouns."

Most of the men treated this anecdote with silent awe. They had unbounded veneration for Dudley's first at Mods. The simple-minded fellows had not much knowledge, grammatical or otherwise themselves.

One gentleman at this point muttered something about "sinking the shop."

Dudley, a little apologetically, resumed:

"Well, old Blogue is a very absent sort of fellow, and has no more business out of Oxford than most of you fellows have to be here. But last week his aunt left him some money, or he had to marry his niece, or something or other of the domestic sort, and he went up to London, somewhere by Buckingham Gate. He was coming home from some tea and turn out, down Regent Street last Tuesday night, about eleven o'clock, and the old moke got into one of his absent fits,

and fancied that he was in High Street or St. Ole's. He sees a man walking sharply before him, and the only idea he can get into his head is that this man is without cap and gown. So he runs after him, and lays his hand on his shoulder, and says, 'Your name and college, if you please, sir.' As soon as he had done this, all at once his mistake flashed upon his mind, and without staying to apologize, he uttered a piercing shriek, and took to his heels."

There was a laugh at the expense of the worthy Proctor.

"But the best of all is to come," added Dudley. "He really had got hold of a University man. It was Charley Trafford, who was in town without having any business to be there. Generally speaking, Charley gets leave for some particular purpose—he wants to have his hair cut, or some tooth requires attention from his London dentist. On this occasion, however, he was up promiscuous-like. Di-

rectly the proctor laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Name and college,' of course Charley knew old Blogue, and thought old Blogue knew him. 'A full sense of his situation,' as they say, occurred to Charley, and he, too, thought it safest to cut and run for it. So here were the two scudding away to the different poles as hard as they could. A policeman, who just heard the proctor scream, and saw Charley running away, gave chase and took him into custody. Another policeman, seeing old Blogue running away, had also stopped him; and Charley was taken up Regent Street, and old Blogue was trotted down Regent Street, until they met in the middle. The policeman in the meantime had been conversing with old Blogue, and fancied that he had recognised him as a begging-letter impostor.

"'You're a clergyman, ain't you?" says X 22.

"'Certainly I am,' says the proctor.

"'And have got a sufferin' wife and nine small children?'

"Fancy old Blogue's horror, especially when the policeman proceeded to add that he supposed they were still in a state of destitution.

"'We've heard all them lies often enough,' said X 22. 'I dare say you know Bow Street very well, and you will hear something not at all to your advantage there to-morrow morning.'

"You see one policeman had captured Blogue, thinking he was running away in consequence of having done something wrong, and the other had done the same with Charley Trafford, being exactly under the same impression. When they were brought together, of course the matter was explained, and they were both liberated. But if Charley had recognized the proctor, old Blogue had, by this time, also recognized him. He had once examined Charley for Mods, and had found him extremely loose on the subject of the preposition.

So he simply repeated his original question, and it would have saved him a good deal of trouble if he had stuck by it from the first. Charley being brought to book, was obliged to give in, and was requested by the proctor to call upon him as soon as he got back to Oxford. I don't quite know the rights of it, but old Blogue, who is not such a bad lot after all, let Charley off very cheaply."

When Dudley had finished his story, which his set applauded vehemently, he and a number of others rose to go. Monday night was the night for the debates at the Union. Bohun wanted to go. But he was fixed to his friends, who were enjoying themselves much beyond their wont, and threatened an unlimited encroachment on his time and hospitality. "Mind and come in and tell me how things go," he said to Dudley, as the latter left him. It was the opening debate of the term, and an interesting one.

There is no institution in Oxford to which I am sure most Oxford men recur with so much grateful recollection. I mean this Union Society. You go up a narrow passage just by the Star Hotel, the same that conducts to Frewen Hall where the Prince of Wales lived during his stay at Oxford, and then you see the large premises occupied by the Society, and first and chiefly the new octagon debating-room, which is of much architectural beauty, and whose walls are adorned with distinguished pre-Raphaelite handiwork. All Oxford could not show a more delicious lounging-place than the Union. The splendid debating-room was liberally furnished with all the daily papers; next to this was a room for weekly and foreign periodicals, rooms for writing letters, a magazine-room, a room devoted to an enormous batch of novels from Mr. Mudie's, and a library of many thousand volumes, selected with the utmost care. A great many men, of a cer-

tain class, spent the largest proportion of their time at the Union. For the most part, they were men of a quiet, unambitious tone of mind, with very little turn either for study or dissipation; but they devoted a great deal of time to the appropriate mental aliment provided from Mr. Mudie's place in New Oxford Street, and in the long writing-room took out the amount of their subscription very liberally in paper, envelopes, and stamps—harmless occupations, which might, however, have been attended to elsewhere quite as conveniently as at the Union. These men were diligent attendants also at all the Union debates, in which they only slightly and rarely took part; but they were assiduous listeners down to the last words of the last speaker, and as everybody else was gone by that time, their votes generally determined the division, which, as a rule, is of no importance at all as a test of the weight of argument brought forward in debate, or of the

prevailing opinion in the University. For every Monday night there was a great debate, and the debates at the time of which I speak were very fashionable, and densely attended. They were very good fun, and something much better than fun. There is now quite an illustrious roll of great Parliamentary chiefs who have been formed at the Union. Very much the same kind of reputation which a man makes at the Union, he afterwards achieves at St. Stephen's In fact, one man who was a great admirer of the Oxford institution informed us, that, after all, he considered Parliament as a rather poor imitation of the Union. I suspect at least that the Parliamentary recruits from the Union spoke with less caution and reserve, and with more freshness, frankness, and fire in those younger days. I believe the Oxford Union now excels the kindred institution at Cambridge, once so celebrated in the days of Macaulay and

Praed. The debates are in the hands of senior rather than junior men. Men who have taken their First, their Bachelor's and Master's, their Fellowship, frequently enough speak at the Oxford Union. The speeches manifest a very great degree of literary and oratorical ability. The first is seen where the speaker has most carefully written, and industriously learnt by heart, some oration which is both very instructive and very tiresome; the second, of course, where natural talents for debate are possessed, and then with hardly a tithe of the real knowledge and abilities exhibited to the last instance, are sufficient to enchain the attention, and procure rounds of cheering. I do not wonder that men frequently express much contempt for the gift of fluency in debate—a contempt which is often expressed by the fluent speakers themselves.

The first part of the proceedings are frequently enough a broad farce, a cha-

racter which they sometimes do not lose till the very end. The usages of Parliament are amusingly caricatured. "Does any gentleman wish to ask any question of any of the Society's officers?" asks the President. A brisk fire of questions then succeeds. This is a great opportunity for small men who would like to speak at the Union, but are very nervous, and think they had better cling to matters of detail. Mr. Jones, B.N.C., begs to ask the Treasurer how it has happened that copies of the "Times" were not laid on the table till ten o'clock, the usual time being ten minutes to ten. Treasurer replies that he will speak to the Steward of the Society on the subject, and trusts that such an irregularity will not hereafter occur.

Another honourable member who wishes to draw attention to the state of the stove is greeted with so many ironical cheers, that he thinks it quite as well not to persist in the inquiry. Then the librarian

brings forward his list of books. Some honourable member who prides himself on his knowledge of current literature, objects to the reception of some particular work. Hereupon a division is called for. "The ayes to the right of the chair, the noes to the left," cries the President. But the gentlemen comfortably seated to the right do not care to move, and the gentlemen comfortably seated to the left also do not care to move. A few earnest partisans may change their places, but the great mass continue immoveable. The result of the division is, of course, simply the result of blind chance. If a really good work is lost, the omission is supplied on a future occasion.

The fixed debate of the evening then ensues. The subject may be historical, or philosophical, or moral, but generally it is political. Thus, Mr. Fitzgibbon, of Magdalen, who understood German, and was of a metaphysical turn of mind, once

brought forward the motion, "that eclecticism is the only true philosophy." To this an amendment was moved by the Honourable Mr. Firebrace, of All Souls, "that this house is unable to grasp the notion of electicism," which was at once carried by an enthusiastic majority. Again, when some friend of Mr. Fitzgibbon brought forward the motion, "that subjects relating to India, considering the importance of that country to England, are grossly neglected by the members of this university," so self-evident a proposition was not sufficient to command a debate, and the motion was carried without a single supporter or a single dissentient. The house, abashed at its abysmal ignorance thus displayed, could only silently acquiesce in its own condemnation

A debate, however, is generally a serious matter; so it was to night. Some gentleman of liberal opinions brought forward a sweeping motion in favour of universal suffrage. No Chartist, even on

the famous 10th of April, so declaimed against the rottenness of every existing institution, and the good to be obtained by the destruction and reconstruction of the present political system. The mover, whose father had a seat in the House of Lords, fiercely attacked the aristocratic order to which he belonged. It may be observed of other gentlemen that some of the enthusiasm with which they reformed the universe might well be directed towards the subject of reforming their tailors' bills. We have, however, another sketch to give of the proceedings of this evening, and to reserve to another occasion the humours of a public debate at the Union.

CHAPTER VI.

The College Tutor.

DR. COURTENAY, the tutor and censor, sat in his library. Both his sitting-rooms, and they were large and handsome, formed part of his library; but the outer and larger room was his public and receiving-room, and this inner one was the more familiar study, the *sanctum*. He had been to hall and common room, and had now returned to the solitude, which was, perhaps, more congenial to his disposition. He was not, in fact, a very social man, somewhat abstemious and austere, and when he relaxed it was chiefly because he maintained as a dogma that cheerfulness was a duty. But he

was an earnest and conscientious man, one to whom each hour and its passing employment appeared always invested in a severely religious light. This evening he made his tea himself, and drank a cup, and then took up a Chaldee lexicon and grammar, for to this language he had dedicated this particular evening hour. But his eyes were hardly fixed on the antique, mysterious characters of the star-gazers' tongue; he walked up and down his room, and saw the festive lights blazing across the old quadrangle, and merry laughter came through the open casements of the rooms where wine parties were gathered together.

In his own undergraduate course, Mr. Courtenay had shared very slightly in the joyousness and light-heartedness which appears the natural heritage of the "young man in the days of his youth." He was a man of old, and even of noble lineage, but he had been poor, and his poverty had the righteous pride which rigidly for-

bade all debt. After taking very good honours, he had been ordained on his studentship, and, under the influence of fresh and strong religious feeling, had sought out one of the most arduous north-country curacies which he could find. He had laboured there assiduously, and, from time to time, encouraging facts came to his notice which told him that his work had not been altogether unsuccessful. His recall to his college he regarded as providential. He had forsaken his books for active work, and now he once more returned from active work to his beloved library.

At first he felt rather unhappy. To speak to erring men and women of their sin, and the gracious remedy provided for all sin, to be their guide in religious life, and their kind friend and helper in the affairs of this life—surely all this, he thought to himself, was something nobler and better than to pursue the solitary intellectual gratification of the ac-

quisition of knowledge, something better and nobler than the instilling into the spoilt children of fortune that modicum of information which was to form one more element in the happiness and success of their lives. Mr. Courtenay had belonged to a rather rigid evangelical set in Oxford—a set the more rigid from the paucity of their numbers. Most of these held learning and thought in light esteem, compared with the practical work of active evangelization. But Mr. Courtenay's well-ordered mind had no difficulty in obtaining comfort and assurance on this subject. If God had vouchsafed to his creatures this universe of knowledge, He had surely meant that they should work herein, perhaps in the case of some men that this should be the exclusive work of their lives.

So Mr. Courtenay laid aside the distribution of religious tracts, and once more perused the old Greek authors, and added thereto this new study of Chaldee. But was it not possible, he thought to

himself, that within these college walls he might find and execute a ministerial responsibility? His mind travelled back to the days soon after he had matriculated. An aged clergyman in the city of Oxford had then sought him out, on the strength of an old acquaintance with some member of his family. This friendship had formed a turning point in his life, for in the rector's house Mr. Courtenay had found the society which his proud and sensitive spirit shunned within the walls of his own college. Here, too, he had happily received religious impressions which had deepened and deepened, until they became the absorbing principles of his life. Was it not possible, he asked himself, that he might watch over others, even as this good man had watched over him? Was it not true that many of these strong and careless young men were walking in the broad and dangerous path, and doing that for which they would hereafter be called to judgment?

His soul yearned in pity and sorrow over them. He knew that his own shy, reserved manner would prevent his obtaining that extensive social influence which might prove an instrument of real good. He knew that any steps taken in honest enthusiasm, without the guidance of wisdom and prudence, would probably excite a measure of ridicule and opposition. He must walk warily; but none the less he must find or must make the opportunities of doing good.

The open, generous heart of youth must, sooner or later, open an avenue through which he could reach the dormant spirit within. So Mr. Courtenay, with loving care, waited and watched; and it had so happened that once or twice occasions had offered themselves in which he had not shrunk from speaking "a word in season," and some light had seemed to break on the performance of the high and difficult duty which he had assigned to himself.

Moreover, the words of a certain text ran in his mind: "The poor ye have always with you." Even in wealthy, prosperous Oxford, they must abound, and give him an opportunity of being more directly about his Master's business. There must be some bedsides of the sick by which he could stand, some unhappy whom he could console, some distressed whom he could relieve. He called upon the clergyman who had succeeded his old friend in that little Oxford benefice. He proffered help which was really needed, and which was gladly received. Certainly a clergyman's profession gives him this advantage that he need never wait for clients. Mr. Courtenay literally went out into the lanes and highways, and pressed upon weary men, touched with the sense of want, the Great Invitation.

It was then this Monday evening, about half-past eight, when the bulk of Mr. Bohun's guests were leaving him, when members were pouring fast into the debat-

ing-room of the Union, that a step was heard on Mr. Courtenay's stair, and a timid knock at his door. Mr. Courtenay gave answer to the summons, and Percival entered.

"Oh, Mr. Percival, glad to see you! Sit down and have a cup of tea."

Percival had had his tea.

"Brought me some composition. I suppose Latin prose. Have you done me that abstract of the 'Theætetus?'"

The Latin prose and the abstract were produced. Truth to say they were neither very good. There were even positive grammatical errors in the prose, and Percival had failed to grasp the meaning of this difficult dialogue. Mr. Courtenay very carefully corrected the mistakes, and tried to expound the Plato, and then found some books bearing on the subject, in which he pencilled certain passages, and strenuously commended them to Mr. Percival's diligent perusal.

"You cannot come to me too often,

Mr. Percival. I am always glad to find a young man anxious to read, and to help him in his reading. At present I have plenty of time, and when I cannot find time I can find you a coach."

"I am sure it is very good of you, sir."

"Not in the least; but I wish to say something to you. The work you have brought me has not, as a matter of fact, been done well. Now you visit the poor and sick sometimes and read with them, do you not? So Mr. Clark, the incumbent of St. Swithin, tells me."

"Very little, sir. There is a poor young man in his district, who was a servant to a scout, and who waited upon me when I first came up, who has been slowly dying of consumption for the last year. I go to see him now and then, but not often elsewhere."

"You are quite right in making such visits. I rejoice to hear that you do so. But you must remember that you are at

Oxford for a definite purpose, that of study, and you should not allow anything to interfere with this. You must not let your good be evil spoken of. It would be a great pity if men should say of you, that you certainly visited the sick, but that you did badly in the schools."

"But I spend very little of my time this way, and that my leisure."

"Well, you have as much right to employ your time this way, as in going to wines or speechifying at the Union. When do you next go to visit this poor fellow?"

"I was going to run round and see him this evening if I could get out before Tom had finished striking."

"You will easily do that," said Mr. Courtenay, referring to his watch; "he will not begin yet for five minutes. I shall be very happy to accompany you, Mr. Percival, to see this scout's boy."

They soon descended the steps into the quadrangle, and passed the pool of water

of old presided over by the statue of Mercury. Then, before Great Tom had tolled one hundred and one, they passed through the ponderous gates beneath the famous archway into St. Aldate's. Then Percival conducted the tutor to the sick man's abode. It was an old-fashioned house, tottering into the street, story upon story. Up the creaking stairs, they made their way to the one room, where a poor woman abode with her sick son, the only son of his mother, and she a widow. In the narrowness and poverty exhibited, it might have been one of the slums of London, or one of the great provincial towns. Mr. Courtenay's face absolutely gladdened when he saw the accustomed signs of poverty—the dilapidated furniture, the coloured counterpane, the chimney array of tinsel ornaments the very few well-worn books, Bible, Prayer-Book, and the "Saints' Everlasting Rest," and against the wall an old coloured picture from the "Illustrated London

News." Such places he knew well. Here he always felt at ease, and could at once become eloquent. On the bed lay a poor, thin, gaunt, wasted figure, looking so death-like that it was a wonder that such a one should be in life. The usual melancholy sights were at hand which indicated that the disease was consumption.

There was rather a sad history belonging to this young man. At the commencement of his illness he held avowedly infidel opinions. Sad to say, he had picked them up within the walls of the college where he had been a servant. It was not so much the opinions which he had heard discussed as the bad conduct which he had witnessed in the case of those from whom better things might have been expected which had wrought the mischief. Illness had broken his frame and crushed his spirits. While a servant in the college he had obtained, not always in the best way, a full supply of his wants. But when stretched on a

sick bed he had none of those material comforts which help to make illness tolerable. Then it was that Percival, missing the familiar face of the servant who brought him his commons, inquired after him, and heard of his dangerous illness.

It was rather awkward and unaccustomed work for our undergraduate, this visitation of the poor. He could not adroitly answer the glib and clever infidel arguments which the poor college servant had picked up, but he could at least open his New Testament, and read some of those beautiful words which never vainly fall upon an honest and true heart, and such, after all, was this. And he gave him material aid, and procured him more from other persons who were better able to supply such. The patient lingered and lingered on in a way that to all lookers on seemed surprising enough. Many long and weary months elapsed. Silently, but effectively, they did their work. They broke up the hard soil of the heart, and brought the

soul-refreshing dew of repentant tears. Percival visited him regularly. He both taught and learnt something. How different was the lot of these two young men. Their ages were the same exactly. But the one was master, the other servant; the one had a spirit at rest and an instructed mind, and how different had been the case with this poor lad. Before one were the bright prospects which belonged to his easy and healthy life, and the other was closing his brief life of toil by the horrible disease which had the only issue of death.

What a wonderful world of speculation is opened by the thought of the future levelling of the irregularities of human condition, and the final vindication of the moral government of the world. Perhaps in such a contrast as this the earlier immortality would make amends for all. Such thoughts as these passed through the mind of the tutor; and for Percival, when there came to him, as to all of us,

times of temptation, there was a restraining power in the recollection of that narrow room, the figure of the dying man, and the holy words and prayers to which his tutor, so kind and saintly, had given utterance there. This is only a sombre chapter. But in endeavouring to reproduce, however inadequately, Oxford days, it would not be sufficient to speak of the large intellectual gathering of its most celebrated club, of its social parties, and the gay romance of young lives, without saying something of the ancient city in which the University is encased, and the sombre shadows which belong to it, in which its members have some share.

CHAPTER VII.

The Adventures of the Day.

IT was not long before the men had quietly settled down to the business of the term, into working order; if that can be called working order in which the work was hardly an appreciable quantity. The reading men were called *saps*, and the saps could almost be reckoned up on one's finger ends. The amusement and the society of the place sadly disturbed all laudable intentions of working. The reading men said that Oxford would be the most delightful place in the world if they could only find a little time for their reading. The non-reading men re-echoed the praises of

Oxford, and only regretted that their repose and peace of mind were periodically disturbed by those detestable examinations.

"I should like to know very much," said young Phipps, of University, "when a man who likes to spend his time usefully can find any opportunities of reading. I give you fellows here a breakfast, and after breakfast I hand round cigars and fluid for the rest of the morning." The appearance of the table attested the remark. "And in return you kindly form my mind and manners for me." A grin went round the table.

"Pray don't mention the mind and manners," said Montfort.

"And then we have a row on the river, and a turn at fives, or kill a few rats, or play at billiards, or read the papers at the Union, and after dinner we again spend a few social hours, and if a man has somebody to read a crib aloud to him for an hour, or manages to write home

and ask for some more money, I think, considering all things, he is a tolerably literary and intellectual sort of fellow."

It was an out-college breakfast. A 'groaning' breakfast had been removed from the table, and most of the party had dispersed. Some had gone to lectures, or their rooms, and some had strolled out for a turn round the Christ Church meadows. Half a dozen men and as many dogs were still in the room. Among these was Dudley. He had no lecture till twelve, and it occurred to him rather strongly that he might as well be working away at the Ethics as sitting amid a smoking party. But you see this sort of thing had a great charm for Dudley. He had been brought up strictly at home, and it was a long time before he had got into any society. Next to him sat a rich and popular fellow, a Montfort of the House, who now, in answer to Phipps, propounded a doctrine over which Mr. Dudley had frequently mused.

"Why, really, Phipps, a man must aspire a little higher than a Scotch terrier. Now, I don't profess to work. Why should I? I don't even know if I shall stay here more than a few months. What shall I want with a degree when I am in the Guards or the diplomatic service? But I just manage to keep up the Greek and Latin which I learned at Eton, and I am picking up some French besides, and I don't consider that I am wasting my time. Many a man does a great deal better than I do. It's all very well for a man, who wants to get an Indian, or a Mastership in a school, or something of that sort, to spend all his time in grinding at the old classical parties. The old classical parties were invented for this sort of people, and they for them. But if a man is independent of these considerations, he may do much better for himself. If he gets up strength and muscle, or is a dab at the Union, or an Amateur Musical, like you, Scott, or a

cricketer like you, Arkwright—or a literary fellow that likes to read at the Bodleian, or to get up German and Italian at the Taylor, like—I am afraid nobody here—seems to me that he is doing quite as well as if he were cramming classics and mathematics."

Montfort was a sensible fellow enough, one of those men who, in their laziness and self-indulgence, often make remarks that show so much sagacity and knowledge, that their companions are surprised and impressed.

"Seems to me," continued Montfort, "that a man might do a deal worse for himself than study three or four hours a day regularly. You wouldn't believe it, you fellows, but on my honour I thought of working for honours once. Give you my solemn word, that last Vac. I read regularly, four or five hours a day, a lot of Greek and logic subjects for Moderations. I never spent a happier time. You don't know how a man enjoys boating or

billiards after he has earned them. I declare to you, I read through a number of the "Quarterly," and three or four of the "Saturday," without turning a hair. I was an uncommonly intelligent and well-informed young man for those six weeks. It was too good to last. I had to come up to Oxford, and of course it was impossible to work at Oxford."

"I should think so indeed," said Dudley. "Now, there is Blades of Balliol. I think Blades was the greatest cheese of his year. Well, he wanted to read for Greats. What did he do? Why, he went down to Banbury, and during term time took a small lodging over a linen-draper's shop, and came back to Oxford when all the men were gone down; and what was the consequence? Why, he took a Double First, all owing to the linen-draper. It wouldn't be a bad move to get rusticated; then a man might have some chance of distinguishing himself."

This conversation continued for some time, and the men present, all of whom, except Montfort and Dudley, had been plucked in their time, arrived at the pleasant conviction that, if they did not distinguish themselves, the fault was in Oxford, and not in themselves. There was, perhaps, some foundation of truth in what was said. There are hundreds of good fellows who take a fair share both in the studies and in the relaxations of Oxford, and who have the good sense and moderation not to allow the one to interfere with the other to any undue extent. Occasionally, there are instances of men who lived very hard and worked very hard, any such may find it necessary at times to retreat from the Oxford companionships, in which they have been too deeply entangled. It was unquestionable that the mighty Blades did, and with most prosperous consequences.

It was nearly one in the afternoon before the last of the set snatched up cap

and gown, and went off to his rooms for his hat. The conversation had been very various, and Mr. Dudley had borne a loud excited share in it, relating various items of his travelling autumn experience, which, if true, were certainly not to his credit. He was the last man who left Phipps's room, arranging to rejoin his friend and take a stroll with him. They strolled down the High, staring at all whom they met, and giving divers orders to the tradesmen with careless magnificence. This was all very well for a man like Montfort, who had his cheque-book, and could at once discharge any demand that might be made; but it was not so well for Dudley. I am free to confess that the character of this young gentleman was showing, this term, signs of rapid deterioration. Unless he amends a little, the success of Moderations will hardly be repeated. He had worked hard because his ambition had lain in the way of the schools, and because he was solitary,

and solitude had encouraged study. But now he had many friends, and various objects of ambition.

After parting with his friends, he met Charley Lester at the bottom of St. Aldate's in a basket-carriage. A harmless good-natured fellow was Charley Lester, with no positive vice about him expect an incorrigible idleness and frivolity which, however, amounted, it might be thought, to viciousness. But as Charley Lester had a great quantity of money, it did not so much signify. Lester thought that he was a very considerable sort of man, inasmuch as he had introduced—at least he claimed to have introduced—the use of the basket-carriage. Certainly he had no sooner got into rooms than he asked the leave of the authorities to keep a basket-carriage, and the authorities, knowing that his people were extremely solvent, made no objection. His turn-out was very pretty, and for a couple of terms every man who

could afford it, and some who could not, had his basket-carriage.

Another whim had seized the House as a House, and with boundless *esprit de corps* Lester had carried it out at some personal inconvenience. Some men made it a rule to go about not in cap and gown, but in beaver. An out-college man might with great propriety wear his cap and gown, but a Christ Church man was not as other men, and he would best signify the mighty difference by wearing a hat. The notion rapidly travelled from two or three men to the whole of the youthful community. The Proctors soon heard of this academical heresy, and a great deal of their time and attention was devoted to putting it down. Lester had been twice proctorized, which cost him a little money; and he was told that when he should be proctorized again, he would meet with extreme consequences. Lester had risen to the heroism of the occasion, and had publicly declared to

his friends that, whatever the extreme consequences might happen to be, he would rather brave them than be induced to leave off his hat. So Lester entertained a great deal of respect for himself, and considered that a kind of glory belonged to his character, which pluck or rustication might obscure, but could not destroy. He was a thoroughly good-natured little man, never so happy as when he had his friends to lunch, or gave them a wine, or could get them into his basket-carriage.

"Would you like a ride, Dudley? Get up, and I will bowl you along like anything you like."

"Which way are you driving?"

"To any mortal place you like. London, if you choose, and we will come back by the last train."

I don't think Charley Lester would at all have liked to be taken at his word.

"I won't go all the way to London with you, Lester. I will go part of the

way, however, and you shall drop me on the road. Suppose we go out in the Donnington direction."

Dudley got into the basket, and Lester drove him very nicely all down the High and over Magdalen Bridge. Then the pace was a little faster. All the while Lester prattled pleasantly. It was pleasant prattle; but you knew what he was going to prattle about, and when you had heard it once or twice before, you did not so much care to hear it again. He expressed himself, with regard to the proctors, very much as Nelson might have expressed himself before going into action with the French. Then he admired his basket-carriage; then he talked about his horse and his terrier. Then he spoke in a boyish, innocent way of his old days at Harton; how one of the masters liked him very much, and how fond he was of that master; and how the head-master had never birched him, although other boys, equally idle but not equally lucky,

had been well birched; and how the present head-master flogged into the fellows much more roundly than the one before. Then Charley laughed very cheerily, as one who had quite escaped any flogging evils now, and could afford to smile at the younger lads over whose backs the ploughers might still plough. But when he spoke the word "plough," a very sad shade came over Charley's face. He had been in twice for Mods, and had been ploughed twice. Did Dudley suppose that if he was ploughed again he would have to leave the House and go to a Hall? And if he went to a Hall, he supposed there would be no particular object in wearing a hat rather than in wearing a cap, and Charley almost cried.

"But I've got three coaches this time," said Lester; "one for Greek, one for Latin, and one for Euclid."

"You don't think the same mighty mind could grasp all three subjects, then?"

Charley was afraid he was being quizzed, and he didn't half like it.

"It's all very well for an awful swell like you, who took a First a Mods, to laugh; but for an ignorant little beggar like me, I think three tutors will perhaps make a fellow safer."

"But didn't you last time get one tutor to set you pieces of Latin prose, and the other tutor to do them for you?"

"Who told you that?"

"Never mind who told me. I knew it, and everybody knew it. It was about the best joke I had heard for a long time."

Charley Lester winced.

"You see, Master Charley, your three tutors won't do you much good, if the second tutor does the work, and you never go near the third. I am told that you never favour a coach with much of your company."

"It's such a beastly grind."

And Charley looked as savage as it was possible for a good-natured Charley to look.

"Never mind," he added, meditatively; "I've got hold of a new dodge for having all the figures of the Euclid propositions written on my hands, and my nails, and my cuffs, and I shall have a crib in my pocket, and two or three of our fellows will be as near as they can to me to give a helping hand, when I am in the Schools."

They had got pretty far on the Donnington road now. Presently they stopped, and asked a boy the distance; but the boy, with all the stolidity of his bucolic mind, stared, and could not articulate any intelligible answer. But a good sort of a woman set them right, and soon the basket-carriage was at the door of the little inn of the little town.

They had been nearly two hours in the fresh air, and Lester said he felt peckish. He went to the bar of the inn, where, instead of taking his refreshment quietly he insisted on treating everybody who

was willing to be treated. There was nobody loth out of quite a little crowd that had collected round the unwonted apparition of the basket-carriage. In the meanwhile, Dudley had quickly interrogated a sort of farming serving-man, who did duty as a waiter, as to where Mr. Larpent lived. It was a mile or so out of the town, he was told. He could not miss it, for there was a clump of trees in front, and a gate, with a path going through a shrubbery which partially concealed the house. And now a quandary arose. What was Dudley to do with Lester? It was very convenient to Dudley that Lester should drive him over; it saved him the long, stupid walk from the railway station, three or four miles off.

But it would not be at all convenient that Mr. Lester should form the acquaintance of the Larpents. That, Mr. Dudley declared to himself, with a great deal of virtuous and natural indignation, would

be poaching upon his preserves. At the same time, it would be hard lines on Charley Lester to get him to drive out so far as Donnington, and then let him go home all by himself, perhaps in the cold and dark.

Nevertheless, the thing was to be done, he quickly decided within himself; but it must be done diplomatically.

"Lester," he said, "I shall lie up here on the sofa for a bit, then I shall get up and take my walk abroad, and inspect the customs and manners of the natives. Seems to me that their customs are oddish, and as for manners, they have not got any. We shall have a chop, and after that I don't care what we do, only let us get back before twelve."

"All right, I'm your man," said Lester.

"Then I shall do my bit of smoke for the present." And the young men did their bit of smoke.

"Charley, haven't you got to meet your coach this afternoon?"

Dudley had made a good guess.

"Oh, never mind about the coach," said Lester. "I daresay he will be very glad to get rid of me, and I am quite sure I shall be very glad to get rid of him; so the obligation is mutual."

"But I do mind about it, very particularly. The Dean won't stand much nonsense. You'll be ploughed again, as sure as fate, if you don't stick close to your tutors, and then you'll have to be a Skimmery man."

Lester looked aghast at the picture.

"I should never forgive myself, and you would never forgive me, if I should be the cause of this. Yes, my dear fellow, I must trot you back to your Latin prose."

"All right. I don't particularly care about staying here. Let us have something more, and then we'll get back as soon as you like."

Then Dudley had to explain that he did not himself contemplate going back. He did this a little awkwardly; at least,

he unwillingly let Lester suspect that, for some reason or other, he was not wanted.

"It would be very nice for us to have some dinner here together, and get back at night. But there's no doubt the Dean's a man who won't stand any nonsense, and the Dean would think that if you were ploughed again it would certainly be great nonsense. If you didn't go to your coach, perhaps your coach might go to the Dean."

"I'll trust him for that," said Lester. "There's not a bit of a skunk about old Mivers. Besides, Mivers always makes allowances for a man, and does not count upon his coming more than twice out of three times."

Then Lester lighted another cigar, and the two young men strolled into the town. The town did not display much to reward the research of travellers. The church was a very interesting one, and various learned papers had been read at different times before various learned societies on

the subjects of its monuments and its brasses, its Galilee porch and its ancient triforium. But to the young men it was a church and nothing more. No ecclesiological ardour burned in their breasts. Then they passed a lowly house, over which was suspended a board with "Mechanics' Institution" thereon, and at the door with books were three or four individuals, who ought to have been mechanics, but who were evidently people of the shopkeeper and small gentry grade. Once or twice, however, uneasy reflections disturbed Mr. Lester. He really wished that he had been flogged at school, so as to save him some of this trouble. Dudley's next warning had the effect of determining him to go off at once. And so it was that our honest young friend was set aside, and Mr. Dudley was highly delighted that for the nonce he had seen the last of him. So it is that men fret under the circumstances that are their safeguards, and are irritable and uneasy

till the safeguards are removed, and they are allowed, easily and leisurely, to take the wrong path.

Dudley was directly in the outskirts of the town. The old, tumble-down town-hall was left behind; so was the old brick house, with the attorney's brass plate on the door; so also was a pretty modern cottage, which nevertheless was also disfigured by a brass plate setting forth that "Dr. Smith, Surgeon," resided there, the complete designation conveying the idea that he was a general practitioner. Then the road was broad, with a good footpath—that is to say, a good foothpath for Oxfordshire. Then a bridge was passed, which spanned one of the numerous Oxfordshire streams—a bridge which would have satisfied the Highlander who liked when he was on a bridge to know when he was on a bridge, and who objected to the monotonous levels of the London bridges because he did not know when he was on or when he was off.

A sharp ascent led to the summit of the low parapeted bridge, which commanded a good prospect, and did not give you a bad chance of tumbling into the water in the case of an unruly horse.

By and by he came to a gateway, where a pretty path led through a shrubbery of evergreens to a comfortable house, which could only be partially seen through the evergreens and the clump of trees in front, which had been mentioned to him. Dudley was not without a little trepidation as he opened the gate and paced the little avenue once or twice before he determined to knock and ring. It was an agreeable adventure to make the first acquaintance of the Larpents, but every agreeable adventure must not necessarily be followed up. He was not quite sure that he was in the right, and probably Larpent *père* and Larpent *mère* might also have their doubts.

The doubts were, however, quite dissipated by the cordial reception which he

received. There was not the smallest necessity for Mr. Dudley to tell the lie which nevertheless he did tell. He had been dining with a friend in the neighbourhood, who had been obliged to get back to Oxford, and the thought had occurred to him that he might as well take this opportunity of accepting the very kind invitation they had given him. A little tremor of excitement had quivered through the small household at his arrival. The old lady was pleased to welcome the fine gentleman from Oxford, with the bright young face and the strong muscular frame, and the sensation of a pleasant surprise even penetrated the stolid nature of the British farmer. The young lady, who looked very pretty and was very becomingly dressed, suddenly departed to a distant part of the house, whence she presently reappeared, looking a shade prettier and dressed a shade more becomingly. The Larpents had dined very early, but there would be dinner

for their guest directly. This, however, was declined. Then they would have a very early tea, and with his tea Mr. Dudley should have ham and eggs. Then Mr. Dudley talked with the farmer, whose talk was of oxen. Mrs. Larpent interposed with livelier topics of conversation, which she thought were better fitted for young people. The new topics reminded Dudley very much of Shakespeare, Taste, and the musical glasses, which made some polite conversation in the "Vicar of Wakefield." They proved too fine for the farmer, who walked into his yard to inspect his cows, and see that his pigs were fed. When he came back, he found that the young lady had settled down to the piano, where, to say the truth, she was playing second class music with only indifferent skill. Mr. Larpent disliked all music, whether good, bad, or indifferent, without, however, being able to detect any difference of kind. So Rosalind began to "discourse eloquent

music" instead. She was rather a clever girl, and could talk a great deal, though in rather a bad style. She cultivated a taste for the satirical. But a very pretty colour came into her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled, and the intonations of her voice were musical, and so, perhaps, it did not make very much difference just at present if her conversation was exactly on a par with her music.

"I don't want to flatter you, Mr. Dudley, but you are a new face, and have got new ideas, and I daresay you can tell us something new, whereas——"

Here Mr. Dudley interposed to say that he hoped he would not be exactly looked upon in the light of a novelty, but might rather be regarded as an old friend.

This was an appeal to the geniality of the little family group, who responded thereto with old-fashioned heartiness.

"The people about here are so dreadfully stupid and ignorant. The great majority of them have never been ten

miles away from Donnington in the course of their whole lives, and they let their minds run into turnips."

"Oh, Rose, you shouldn't say so," said mamma; but mamma laughed, and the father grinned, and evidently showed that they considered it rather clever.

"But surely there are plenty of people of a better class. Have you no resident gentry?"

"There's Mrs. Harrington at the Hall, but she is not a woman I like. She sets up for a great deal, and calls her little place a Hall; but it is no more a Hall," continued Rosalind, with a bold but incongruous climax, "than I am. Oh, I must tell you about Mrs. Harrington and her geraniums."

"Rosalind," said her mother, half-laughingly and half-reprovingly, holding up a fore-finger, "take care of that wicked little tongue of yours."

Rosalind looked upon the warning in the light of a compliment, and continued—

"Mrs. Harrington had a great lot of geraniums, for she thought that would be very grand; and she also kept a gardener, for she thought that would be very grand; but her two grandeurs spoilt each other. Mrs. Harrington can also, if she chooses, be a very passionate little lady; and when she is in a passion, she does not very much care what she says or what she does. It is not everybody who will stand her ladyship's airs and graces. Her gardener wouldn't, for one. He was very provoking one day—something about the geraniums—and Mrs. Harrington gave him a slap in the face. The man pretended she had knocked him down, and made a point of falling upon the most beautiful of her geraniums. When he got up, Mrs. Harrington gave him another slap, and the man fell down again, and made a point of finishing off her remaining geraniums. Of course, when she made a complaint against the gardener, the gardener had a very good

complaint against her. The result was, that much of her grandeur disappeared, for she lost both her gardener and her famous geraniums."

"What a vulgar person she must be!" said Dudley. "I hope, Miss Larpent, that you have pleasanter neighbours. Who is the clergyman of your parish?"

"Oh, the clergyman is a bachelor, a very great man, and we don't see over much of him. He is a Canon of St. Orwell, and is there much oftener than here. I daresay you have heard of him—Dr. Prendergast."

"I have heard of him several times. It is said that he is to be made a bishop one of these days."

"We have heard so too, but nothing seems to come of it. He has a curate here, a very nice man; but his wife, Mrs. Thomas Turton, is not quite so nice. We know what Mrs. T. T. stands for besides Mrs. Thomas Turton; don't we, mamma?"

"What does it stand for?" asked Dudley, rather amused.

"T. T. stands for Tea and Turn-out. When she asks her friends to tea—and, according to her present system, she will not have or keep them long—she gives you what she calls tea, but which, in reality, is thin milk and water; and if you are good, you may have jam with your bread, and butter. You are expected to go away supperless at nine o'clock. I like calling her Mrs. T. T. best, because that means something more than Mrs. Thomas Turton."

It must be owned that this young lady was rather a Vivien in the management of her conversation.

Just at this minute, the gate was heard to creak, and presently a robust clergyman in a shovel hat was observed to be making his way towards the front door.

"It's Dr. Prendergast, I declare," exclaimed Rosalind, "making his half-yearly

call. He makes us two calls *per annum*," she continued, addressing herself to Dudley, "for all the world as if he came about the income-tax."

"So different from dear Canon Percival," said Mrs. Larpent. "He would be in and out day after day for months together when he was spending his time at the Rectory. Not the least pride about him; nothing but kindness and love."

It might have been added, that Canon Percival was an easy, lazy, good-natured man, who was especially fond of sauntering into his neighbours' houses, and of welcoming them in his own. Indeed, although a pluralist, he did not find very much else to do. Now, Dr. Prendergast was a very different sort of man. His was a name of terror to the Committee of Education and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He was as well acquainted with the Fathers as with his own brothers and sisters. If any man inadvertently

attributed a wrong passage to Irenæus, he was down upon him in a moment to assign it to Clemens Alexandrinus, or whoever might be the rightful author. Besides waging his paper-wars, he was always full of active work for the good of the Church; by which he meant, not alone his own Mother Church, but the cause of Catholic truth throughout Europe.

Dudley had the wit to see that, although his own visit was not unimportant, it was quite thrown into the shade by the superior importance of this visit of Dr. Prendergast's. He had rather a quick, bustling manner, and appeared to be conscious that he was an important personage; but withal there was an expression of great power and interest in his face, and at times his looks wore an expression of great benignity.

Dudley felt that he was in the presence of one who was a good man, and who had many claims to the title of a great man.

For himself, he did not feel either great or good. He felt rather abashed that, in the course of this adventure, which had just the suspicion of an intrigue about it, he should have encountered such a person. The Canon, indeed, gave him a penetrating glance, which had the effect of making him feel slightly uncomfortable. But, after all, he thought to himself, Rosalind Larpent was a much more important object than Canon Prendergast could be. So the young people, while the elder folks talked with the Canon, drew their chairs nearer, and began to converse in half-whispers, as if quite sufficient for themselves, and self-contained, and not caring to mingle in the graver talk.

But the Canon put on his kindest and most benignant expression, and moved towards the spot where Rosalind was sitting. There was a mixture of earnestness and courtly suavity in his manner.

"I have always considered you a kind of pet lamb in my flock, Miss Rosalind;

and although I am too much occupied to be permitted to see much of my people, yet I bear them very much in my thoughts."

Rosalind instinctively arose, coloured, and for once in a way stammered a little.

"I see you do not take a class in the Sunday school as you once used to do, young lady."

The young lady answered—

"I am afraid I am not quite so good as I used to be, Dr. Prendergast."

The words were said gaily, but the Canon listened gravely, and with an expression that showed that he was rather pained.

"I am sorry to hear you say so, and hope you are doing yourself injustice. When we are young our steps ought not to be retrograde, but steps in advance. I am always sorry to hear of the abandoning of a good and self-denying custom."

Then Rosalind, with her usual fluency, began to make excellent excuses. The number of the scholars was rather falling off, and the number of the teachers was rather increasing. Consequently, she felt that she could not be of much use. She, therefore, thought she might do best by staying at home. Had the Canon pressed his questions, I think Rosalind would have owned that she had been in the wrong, and that the excuses were hardly valid. But Dr. Prendergast did not argue. He addressed himself to Dudley, who was fingering his watch-chain, and dreading some such incursion.

"My friend Mr. Larpent mentioned incidentally just now that you were from Oxford. May I ask your name and college?"

It was rather a Proctor's question, but Dudley could no more venture to mislead him than to mislead the Proctor.

"Dudley, of Christ Church," he answered a little brusquely.

The Canon immediately entered the name on the faithful tablets of his memory.

"I hope you work hard, young gentleman. I was a Christ Church man myself, and I worked rather hard, but I have always regretted that I did not work harder. We live in times in which nobody can afford to be idle."

Dudley answered frankly that hitherto he had worked rather hard, and had taken a First in Mods, but that he was rather beginning to get tired of it.

"Oh, you must not say that," said the Canon. "These encouraging successes ought to induce you to persevere. I have a great sympathy with young men," he continued, in his kindliest manner. "They have their way to make in the world, and are surrounded with their own special difficulties. Do you remember the words of the Psalmist, 'How shall a young man cleanse his way?'"

"By taking heed thereto," replied Dud-

ley, getting excessively hot, and feeling just as if he were answering a question in the schools; conscious also that all eyes were upon him.

"That would be only a worldly maxim, as you put it, Mr. Dudley. The Psalmist says, 'By taking heed thereto, *according to thy word.*'"

The Canon resumed in the midst of a general pause.

"We have all got to cleanse our way, my friends, and we can only do it by taking heed to the Word of God. That is our chief business in this world, and may we all have grace given us to do it."

And then Dr. Prendergast took his leave. He was a good man, and did not like to make one of these rare visits to a parishioner without putting in a word for good. He must say a word in season, or, if need be, a word out of season. It is an easy thing to call upon a rich man, and talk as rich people like

to talk. It is an easy thing also to call upon a poor or sick man, and to talk in that graver strain to which poor men or sick men will easily listen. But it is difficult to call upon a substantial parishioner, on a visit of courtesy, and also make it a visit of religious duty. I really think the Rector of Donnington managed very nicely.

"It was not exactly fair of him," grumbled Dudley, however, "to annex me to his parish, and direct his discourse especially to myself."

"I really quite felt for you," said Rosalind; "he must have made you feel very uncomfortable. At least you looked very uncomfortable."

"I don't think you came off yourself with such very flying colours, Miss Rosalind. I thought at one time that the Canon was going to be very severe upon you in the matter of the Sunday school."

"Very true. We were quite in the same boat."

"It is quite a happiness to me," answered Dudley, "to know that in any sort of way we are in the same boat."

And now the tea came in. These primitive people had their tea between four and five. Also for the special behoof of Mr. Dudley came in a smoking dish of eggs and ham, to which he did ample justice. A brandy-flask was also placed on the table, whether by local custom, or by the private custom of Mr. Larpent. So the farmer and his guest mixed together the cup that cheers and does not inebriate, with the cup that inebriates but does not cheer.

The impression left by the Canon's grave words was only of a very transient character. It is mortifying to think how very transient such impressions are. Unbounded gaiety soon reigned in the room. If there was not much wit there was a great deal of laughing, which answered the same purpose. There is a natural efflorescence of spirits in the young

which approximates nearly to the intellectual faculty of wit, and which might also be mistaken for it. After tea there was still a little light left, and Mr. Larpent said that they would show Mr. Dudley a short way to the railway station, which would, in fact, make his walk only three miles instead of nearly six. Dudley's first idea was that he should very much like to stay two or three hours longer. But he was a prudent young man in matters that regarded his personal comfort, and he reflected that six miles in the dark over bad roads could not be very comfortable. It was quite possible that he might get a walk with Rosalind. And this notion proved to be correct.

"Rosalind, my dear," said her mother, "put your hat on, and show Mr. Dudley the way down the back lane, past the mill, and through the meadows, which will bring him soonest to the station. I never go out this time of the day myself, for the fear of rheumatism. Father will

overtake you or meet you, as soon as he has finished his second pipe."

Now here I humbly think Mrs. Larpent was wrong. She was trusting her little Red Riding-Hood with what, after all, might prove to be a wolf. It was hardly etiquette to let this stranger young man set off on a solitary ramble with this young lady. Young people are often very impatient of matters of mere etiquette, and of the excessive deference which in England we yield to the proprieties. But this etiquette and these proprieties are simply the rules which a very long experience has taught those who came before us to be upon the whole necessary and wise. They are useful generalizations, which have been gained by the bitter knowledge of an evil world. I grant fully that for ninety-nine of my readers such safeguards may be quite unnecessary. They have their own innate sense of what is right and becoming, and this is an invisible panoply. But the hundredth

person is a weak person, and it is for a weak person especially that all rules and regulations have a beneficial operation.

Rosalind soon made her appearance. She looked very nice in her hat, and furs, and autumn mantle. Then they went out. Rosalind played the *cicerone*. There was the little hill from which, on a clear day, they could discern the towers of Oxford with such distinctness. That narrow streamlet formed the boundary line between Oxford and the adjacent county. Not far off were the remains of a great wild forest; it had been nearly all disafforested, but there were still remains which in summer were very beautiful. The great Roman road passed not far from here, the name of which Rosalind could not pronounce quite properly, and she prudently abstained from discussing the subject much; but she assured Dudley it was still quite possible to trace the path which the great Roman road had taken. A little way in the forest was a

lonely spot where once a murder was committed, and an inscription was raised there, setting forth the date, with the name of the murderer and his victim. Then Rosalind shuddered, and said she could never bear to pass that spot, and was glad they were not going to do so now. Close by was the Thames flowing swiftly beneath steep banks, through meadow and park. Many artists had been to sketch the spot, Rosalind said, and others came for the sake of the very good fishing.

"Have you any great house about here?"

"There are one or two. There is Sir Thomas Lake at the Cedars, and a great deal of the Duke's land, but he lives at Blenheim; and then there are a large number of small holdings. The best seat about here, half a dozen miles off, is Ladymead Park, Lord Bohun's place. That, I am told, is a very pretty place. There is a great num-

ber of pictures and curiosities from Italy."

"So I have heard; but I had no idea that you were so near it as all that. Lord Bohun's son is at the same college with myself, and is a friend of mine."

"Then, perhaps, you will go to Ladymead Park some day, and see the pictures."

"Perhaps I shall. Do you know, Rosalind—"

At this familiar address the young lady started a little, and did her best to look very dignified, which is, however, rather a difficult thing for a flighty child, and she was not much better, to achieve.

"I beg your pardon for my unlucky slip; but I was about to say that this place is so quiet and retired, that it would do very nicely for what we call at Oxford a reading party. But I am afraid that, when a number of men get together, although you may call it a reading party, there is not in reality very much done.

Now, I daresay I might find a little quiet box in the village where I might bring my books, and read very quietly for a couple of months. Would you mind that? There would be the danger that I might become quite an intruder."

Rosalind said she should not in the least mind it. She candidly added that she should like it very much. Her looks affirmed what she said.

The beauty of the sunset hour belongs to the autumnal sunset, as much as or more than to any other season. The evening lights faintly flushed the sky, and were faintly reflected on the river. The sighing winds came from the old forest, where the bare trees fitfully swayed their arms. The secluded lane, and the mill-wheel which lazily turned in the babbling stream would have satisfied the eye of one of the artist visitors to Donnington. The last red sunbeam suddenly shot forth beneath a cloud, giving a wild and sudden illumination before the dim lordly disc descended

below the horizon. Then the not unpleasing twilight brooded over the landscape.

Somehow or other Dudley contrived to establish his point, to call the young lady simply Rosalind. Then the young people prattled, interestingly enough to themselves, but what would appear very vapid in print. It is very wonderful, that way of a man with a maid, which puzzled King Solomon. Dudley, in a thoughtless, remorseless way, tried hard to make this village girl like him. She certainly liked him very much. Her ill-regulated little mind would be full of him for some time to come. Before he took his leave he took his kiss. She was nearly ready to cry, but she could not help it. Then she went homewards, thinking herself half-engaged to Mr. Dudley; and Mr. Dudley went his way, thinking what a pretty little plebeian she was.

The farmer met his girl as she was dreamily moving on towards Donnington. It

would soon grow dark, and he took great care about his child's health and safety. There is a certain proverb, which nobody knew better than Farmer Larpent, about shutting the door after the steed is stolen. It certainly seems to me that Farmer Larpent was doing something very similar on the present occasion.

It so happened that Charley Lester came to much sorrow on the evening of this rather eventful day.

Charley had driven home a little sadly, and had gone to his tutor's, with whom he read diligently for an hour. Did Mr. Mivers really think he would pass? Certainly, if he would only be attentive in the future, as he had just proved. Then Charley resolved to be regular. He felt quite happy and light-hearted when he had done some honest work, and was really very glad that he had not stopped at Donnington with Dudley. He dined in Hall that day instead of dining at the pastrycook's, and, thanks to his appetite,

found the dinner perfectly satisfac ory. He had to go and wine with a man at Exeter, so he had to go to his rooms, to lay aside his cap and gown to go out "in beaver." He must let those "squills" see—for so he called out-college men—that he was true to the great point of wearing a hat instead of cap and gown. So he went to the wine—a large noisy wine such as was common enough at Exeter in those days—where I hope his behaviour about the hat was duly noticed and appreciated.

Somebody mentioned casually that one of the Proctors had just been discovered somewhere about the parks. The man had just come in, and supposed that the Proctor was doing so "from information which he had received." Presently Lester resolved to take a stroll in the parks. He wanted a little fresh air after the heated atmosphere of the wine party. There was also the pleasing excitement of the peril of being proctorized,

although it was very unlikely that the Proctor would still be about the parks. But it did so happen, nevertheless, that he really met the Proctor, and the Proctor requested the honour of a a call at nine o'clock next morning.

Next morning accordingly the Proctor fined him a sovereign. Lester very leisurely took out his purse, and handed the Proctor a five-pound note.

The Proctor looked annoyed. He had asked for a sovereign and he expected a sovereign. It was not a usual thing that he should oblige a culprit with change, and he had asked for one pound and not five pounds.

"Never mind about the change," said Charley, impudently.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked the Proctor, reddening and feeling rather angry.

"What I mean is this," said Lester, deliberately. "As I generally wear a hat, you will have, in all probability, to fine

me several times again. So you had better put the five-pound-note to my side of the account."

The Proctor was very wrathful. It was not personal wrath. The Proctor was a learned, kind, and worthy man. He had to do his duty, and he tried to allow no personal feelings to intrude upon his duties. Here was a flagrant case of contempt and insubordination.

"Mr. Lester," he said, "I have already had to deal with you for being without your cap and gown at wrong times of the day. I believe the other Proctor has also several times had occasion to do the same. After these repeated offences, I was dealing too leniently with you in inflicting a mere fine."

Lester did not at all like this line of argument.

"What you have said about the five-pound-note was extremely foolish, and very ungentlemanly. In all probability you will find that this is a much more

serious matter than a great many five-pound-notes. You will certainly hear something more about this. I shall probably think it my duty to communicate with the Dean of Christ Church."

Lester murmured something about being very sorry and not meaning any offence.

"Who is your college tutor, sir?"

"Mr. Courtenay."

"Very well, sir. I shall call on Mr. Courtenay or on the Dean."

Charley Lester went back to his quarters feeling unhappy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lady Edith Bohun.

IT so happens that we have another breakfast to mention, though of a different kind to that mentioned in our last chapter. There was no profuse luxury about the simple entertainment which Mr. Bohun gave his friends one Tuesday morning this term. The guests really came to talk, and the feeding was only a subsidiary part of the business. Mr. Bohun selected his company well. He had asked a few reading men and a few political men like himself, men who spoke at the "Union," and who had their aspirations. Bohun was a very politic sort of man. He knew all the best men,

whether they were reading men or feeding men. Men were instruments, and to command men was to possess great influence, and influence was very dear to his heart.

Mr. Bohun was fast developing the character of an adroit and skilful politician. He had made a very good speech at the "Union" the night before. His set had loudly cheered him, and in the festivity of his triumph he had asked some of them to breakfast. The cheering had indeed been genuine; the speech showed thought and reading, and had been neat, pointed, and emphatic. But Mr. Bohun is deficient in passion and energy, and lacks breadth of mind. Among the many men who know him and like him, there is a suspicion of his sincerity. His very refinement, and that very proficiency in social arts which he is attaining, will surely unfit him for becoming a ruler of men. There is a prosperous future before him in which

he will attain name and place. But he will never influence the destinies of England.

He is the sort of man out of which they make Lords of the Treasury and Under-Secretaries of State, and it is remotely possible that by family or political combinations he might be a Cabinet Minister. Bohun had already set his heart upon being a Cabinet Minister, and his strong tenacity of purpose will materially aid him. His object is far away in the distance; but still this is the object which he avows to himself—a high and honourable one, which has a very useful influence over him.

This autumn was a memorable one in the political world. The Conservatives were in power, and for many weary years, with the exception of a brief interlude, the Conservatives, much deserving, much enduring, had not tasted those sweets of office so dear to the hearts of English gentlemen. Then came the affair of the

lorcha "Arrow" in the Chinese waters. Thanks in great measure to the brilliant eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, the majority of the House of Commons had decided against the Government. Then came the dissolution, and Lord Palmerston more plainly than ever was declared the favourite of the nation by a decisive majority of votes. Then the Dictator, metamorphorically speaking, waxed fat and kicked. He treated men dictatorially—and English gentlemen do not like to be treated dictatorially. There was a kind of prosperous insolence about him which made men feel sore.

It was a wonderful moral and political mistake for an old man to make, who had acquired a deep sagacity in human affairs and had grown old among them. Great murmurs were heard on every side. Liberal members would sometimes say very plainly that they would be glad of an opportunity to vote against Lord Palmerston. The opportunity came. Or-

sini made his attack upon the Emperor. The French army raged against England as a nest of assassins. Similar language was held in Paris in very significant quarters. The English Ministry determined, what was in itself a very right thing, to amend the law of conspiracy. But then Count Walewski's despatch was not answered in the way that befitted any approach to French intimidation. Consequently, the discontented Liberals coalesced with the Tories; and one morning it was suddenly known in the country that Lord Palmerston's Government had suffered a defeat, and had virtually ceased to exist. Then the Conservatives once more got into office. It was confidently expected, however, that they would be ejected before the end of the session. The end of the session, however, found them still in office. The memorable attempt to oust them in reference to Lord Canning proved a most dramatic failure.

So the recess came on, and it was un-

derstood that the Tory Ministry were giving their attention to the details of the new Reform Bill. Last night a debate of the Oxford Union had been on the motion "That the Earl of Derby's Government was deserving of their confidence." This motion, which Mr. Algernon Bohun had eloquently supported, had been carried by a large majority, and it was fondly hoped by the Derbyites of the "Union" that this was symptomatic of a majority in the country.

"The great question is whether Gladstone will join the ministry. I don't see why he shouldn't; and if he does, that will be a most substantial gain to them." So said Mr. Bohun.

"At any rate, he takes office from them in going out to the Ionian Islands."

"Oh, that is only because he has been writing his big book on Homer. I believe that he is determined to vindicate the character of Helen, and to upset the received theory in a supplementary volume."

"I am afraid that he and Mr. Disraeli would never work together very harmoniously. I have witnessed nearly all their gladiatorial fights, I think," said Bohun. "Whenever there is a field-day in the House, my father gets me in under the gallery; and I think nothing of going from Oxford to London to hear a debate."

"Nothing like early practice, and plenty of it," remarked Mr. Montfort. "You will know all about parliamentary usages when you get into the House. When do you expect to get in, Bohun?"

"I must take my degree first, and, if possible, a good class. I shall get in almost as soon as I have done that. Mr. Ormsby, who is very tired of the House, and who sits for that division of the county where my father's property is, would not like in any case to hold it for more than a year or two more. And then, I think, I shall really be an M.P."

"Unless some Palmerstonian turns you out."

"I don't think they are very strong in the counties; at least, not in our county."

"You will see that Gladstone will turn Palmerstonian."

"Then Gladstone will lose his seat for Oxford," said Mr. Arkwright.

"That remains to be seen," replied Bohun. "There is nobody like Gladstone, after all," continued Bohun. "My general instinct is always to side with Gladstone. If he turn Liberal, it will be a great temptation to follow him."

"I don't know," replied Montfort, drily; "Gladstone may turn any way he likes, and people will always respect him in his vagaries, for they know that nothing but the finest motives lead him aside. But when other men veer and trim between different parties, people talk of trimming and ratting."

"I don't see why they shouldn't trim and rat," said Mr. Arkwright, "if you mean by that, that he may keep his mind

open to new impressions, and go on learning as he gets older."

Here Mr. Warner interposed. He had a strong taste for literature, and disliked politics. Now Bohun considered literature to be a very good thing in its way, but something altogether subsidiary to the science or the game of politics. Mr. Warner had very considerable literary power. He had already begun to contribute to the magazines; and it was whispered that some wonderful article in a new review—on the Poetry of Metaphysics, or the Metaphysics of Poetry, or something equally grand—was by him. His friends thought it was a "tall thing" to do; but Bohun would greatly have preferred that it had been a leading article in the "Times."

"Certainly the finest thing out for a long time is Mrs. Browning's 'Aurora Leigh.' The Brownings are wonderful people. I question whether in the long run, by persons of poetic insight, Robert

Browning will not be adjudged to be a greater poet than Tennyson. There is a want of constructive power about Tennyson. He is unequal to a sustained poem, such, for instance, as 'Aurora Leigh' is."

Here a cry of indignation was set up. It is never safe to criticize Tennyson in the presence of undergraduates. They grow rabid. Mr. Warner ought to have addressed his criticism to poets or metaphysicians. He argued his point, however, both poetically and metaphysically. The discussion which ensued was by no means bad.

It was soon ten o'clock, and then, as a matter of course, the party dispersed. The men had lectures, or, if they had not lectures, they knew well the value of morning hours. Even Warner, who was a Balliol man, surrendered for a time his favourite tastes, to get up the details of the Peloponnesian war. Bohun subsided into the Oxonian's second bible, the Ethics of Aristotle.

An hour or two had passed away, when two ladies inquired at the Canterbury Lodge where Mr. Bohun's rooms in Peckwater were. As they passed the quadrangle, they were admiringly eyed by such men as were playing with their terriers at the windows. Lord Melfort, who was passing through the quadrangle, recognized the younger lady, and made one of his grandest bows. They knocked at Bohun's door, and the tap was hardly answered when the younger lady bounded into the room, and was followed in a more stately manner by her elder companion. Algernon was caught up and kissed almost before he recognized his sister Edith. She was excessively attached to her brother, who, on his part, entertained a very warm affection for her. Her face was lighted up with excitement and pleasure. Her brother was really very pleased with the visit, though rather at a loss to know what he had better do with her.

"And Mrs. Ponsonby, how do you do? But how in the world does it happen that you have come to Oxford to-day? Why did you not write me a note last night to tell me you were coming?"

"You see, it was only last night that Cousin Mary found she was obliged to run down and see the Master of St. James. She told mamma that she would bring me with her, and take me back safely in time for dinner, at a quarter to eight. As I told you in my last letter, we are in London for a week before we go on to Brighton. I have always wanted to see Oxford, and I have particularly wanted to see you in your rooms, Algy. I was so glad when mamma said I might come; and here I am. First let me see you, and then let me see everything else."

I do not know whether, speaking accurately, Lady Edith Bohun would be considered a beautiful girl. Before they could put such a question critically, people found themselves admiring her

and loving her; and, under the influence of love and admiration, an affirmative verdict would, of course, be given. There was such an expression of sweetness, goodness, and intelligence in the countenance—that face was so brilliantly irradiated with every passing thought or emotion; there was so much dignity and grace in every movement; the eye so calm, earnest, and truthful; the voice so melodious and clear—that you forgot the question of mere physical beauty in the sense of the higher beauty which struck you so much. The woman's crowning gifts of purity and intellect were here. Her face was clear, but colourless; but, nevertheless, from her keen sensibility, it constantly mantled with transitory roses. She would anywhere be remarked as a girl of singular elegance and refinement, and she had the grace of a lithe figure. She was generally put down as beautiful, although the exact application of such an extreme

epithet might be criticized. She was now eighteen, and her distant cousin, Mrs. Ponsonby, who was chaperoning her, might be a dozen or fifteen years older.

No shadow had hitherto darkened her fair young life, which had expanded in the happiest English home, cultivated with all careful culture, watched with unfailing tenderness and wisdom. It might be said, indeed, that her mind was too far developed for her age, and that her love for letters and art was so excessive, that it somewhat separated her from most companions of her age. But you would not wish to alter this. Her intellectual superiority was so tempered by an affectionate, unselfish, and retiring disposition, that it was with great difficulty you made the discovery of these intellectual gifts. Persons who knew the Bohun family well said that Algernon Bohun inherited his father's fine person, but the disposition of his mother's family, who had many good

qualities, and were shrewd, hard, worldly, persevering. people, and made that wonderful amount of money in Lancashire. Whereas Edith, they said, inherited the thoughtful, yet generous disposition of the good Earl Bohun, together with her mother's sweet face, which, more than land or gold, or the hope of a step in the peerage which these eventually obtained for him, captivated the young lord when first he visited Lancashire.

Mrs. Ponsonby explained that she had not much to do with the Master of St. James's. He was the husband of a sister who had died long ago. He was rather ill, so she ought to see him; and there were, moreover, some business matters between them that required attention.

"I must lionize you and Edith, Mrs. Ponsonby," said Bohun.

"I suppose that is exactly what we came for," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

Mrs. Ponsonby did not appreciate the

fact that this lionizing involved the sacrifice of a good part of the morning, which, to a man, reading hard for final honours, and anxious to take them as soon as he could, was a very serious sacrifice indeed.

"We will have lunch at two. Between one and two I shall be obliged to leave you, for I have to go to my private tutor, who is a very great man, and full of pupils, and if I did not go, he would not be able to find me another hour instead."

So Mr. Bohun lionized his sister and her friend, to the extent of taking them down the High Street, and showing them the Bodleian and the Radcliffe. It was past eleven when they came to him, and about twelve when they started; so Bohun did not take them far before he had to go to his private tutor's. He was a young man who knew his interest very well, and he made up his mind that it was not at all to his interest that he should lose this particular hour.

"I will put you in the way of seeing something till lunch time. You had better not go much beyond Christ Church. I suppose you would like to see the Cathedral?"

"But I should like to see it later in the afternoon, Algy. I have made up my mind to go to the cathedral service. I am so fond of a cathedral service."

"Well, that is a sort of thing I can't at all understand," said Mr. Bohun. "Several men up here are quite miserable if they miss a musical service any day of the week. Now, there is that little Percival, whom my father took up, and had to dinner once or twice last season, he is never so happy as when he is at the cathedral, or Magdalen, or Merton, or New, to hear the anthem."

"Talking of Mr. Percival," said Edith, "I declare I see him over there."

"You are quite right, Edith. I see Mr. Courtenay's twelve o'clock lecture is just over, and they are coming out.

There's Percival and there's Lord Melfort. It is odd that you should see perhaps the only two men whom you know at Christ Church."

"We met Lord Melfort as we came to your rooms," said Edith.

"Indeed!" said her brother. "I am sure he will be very pleased to show you over Christ Church."

Now, Algernon Bohun had an idea that it would be good for Lord Melfort to know more of Edith. There had been some little idea, in certain quarters, of a Melfort alliance with the Bohuns.

"I daresay Mr. Percival would be good enough to be our guide for a little while," said Lady Edith.

"You had better have Lord Melfort," said Mrs. Ponsonby, who preferred the escort of a lord to any other escort.

"Yes, I will ask Melfort," said Bohun, who also thought that Lord Melfort would manage the escort business better.

"But I had rather have Mr. Percival,"

said Edith; "I know him better and I like him better than I do Lord Melfort. If he goes to these chapels every day, he must know a good deal about them; and I don't think," she added, with the least touch of satire, "that Lord Melfort goes to chapel every day."

"Shows his sense," said Algernon.

"Oh, Algernon, I should be much happier if I thought that you were one of those who loved the Church."

Bohun stepped across the path, and called to Percival. He asked him to lunch, and, in the meantime, would he show the ladies the Hall and Library.

Poor Percival was suddenly swept away into fairy-land. He was delighted with Lady Edith's simple, kindly greeting. He looked upon her as a sort of superior being, dropped from the skies. He would just take off his cap and gown.

"I cannot say that I think the ordinary under-graduate cap and gown are at all pretty," said Mrs. Ponsonby. I am afraid

Mrs. Ponsonby had caught sight of that other cap with the gold tassel, and was proving herself a little bit of a tuft-hunter.

"We ought to be shown over the college buildings by some one in college-costume; so do not leave us, Mr. Percival, especially as I see my brother cannot wait any longer."

Then Percival led them towards the Hall. At the foot of the broad stairs, they paused to admire the tall, slender shaft which supports the branched roof. Then they entered the Hall. Edith uttered an exclamation of gratified astonishment, as the whole of the magnificent room was revealed to her. Percival felt gratified by this involuntary homage to the glories of Christ Church.

"It used to be the second longest room to Westminster Hall," said Percival. "Charles the First held his House of Commons here. The Lords used to meet in the schools."

"Poor King Charles!" said Edith. "You have so much in Oxford to be always reminding you of King Charles. Do you gentlemen of Oxford ever think about him?"

"I do, at least, very often," replied Percival.

"And what do you think about King Charles?" asked Mrs. Ponsonby.

"I hardly dare trust myself with an opinion, but——"

"I have a very strong opinion," interposed Edith, with flashing eyes. "The unhappy, tender, gentle king, clinging to what he believed to be right in Church and State, hunted down to death by ferocious soldiers and narrow-minded bigots. But I will not trust myself to say what I feel. But were you not about to say something, Mr. Percival?"

"I sometimes try to picture to myself," answered Percival, "what Oxford would be like at the time of the rebellion. The waters all out in the low lands

beyond the fortifications—the troopers spurring in from skirmish—the quiet students mixed up with the crowds of warlike Lords and Commons — Queen Henrietta and her ladies walking sadly by the Christ Church meadows—and the dear king struggling against the ill news that keeps pouring in, while the grief of repentance is at his heart for his own errors."

"You are quite eloquent," said Mrs. Ponsonby, slightly elevating her eyebrows.

"Oh, no, I am not," answered Percival. "I leave that to your brother, Lady Edith. He really can be eloquent; and I am told that he made a very good speech at the 'Union' last night."

"I am very glad to hear you say so," answered Edith; "he is so very anxious to get into Parliament, and papa also wishes it very much. I am sure he would get on well, he is so fond of it."

How glad was Percival to be able to praise Edith's brother to Edith.

They had reached the noble window in the entrance at the end of the Hall. Edith looked at the central pictures.

"We need not ask who this is," she said; "that is Holbein's Henry VIII. What a wonderful portrait! I suppose it is the best we have."

"That one exactly opposite to us at the other end of the Hall is Lord Wellesley, the brother of the Duke of Wellington."

"He was a very great man," said Edith; "almost as great as the Duke."

"Was he?" simply inquired Percival.

"He was, indeed, I believe. I know some old people who have told me a great deal about what he did when he was in India."

"This," said Percival, "is a portrait which I know very well, because I sit opposite to it every day at dinner—Dr. Longley, the Bishop of Durham."

"You have plenty of bishops and other great men, I see," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"Of which we should have many more," answered Percival; "but only the portraits of those who have been on the foundation are admitted."

"Which of all the portraits do you like best, Mr. Percival?" asked Edith.

"There are two which I especially like; not that I really know much about the men, but because I believe they are the most famous men we have —Locke and Canning. This is Locke. He wrote the Essay on the Human Understanding."

"Have you read it?" asked Mrs. Ponsonby.

"I am sorry to say I have not, madam."

"I daresay Edith has; the child is always reading something."

"Well," said Edith, blushing, "I certainly did find it one day in the library,

and looked into it. I don't remember whether I thought it hard, but I certainly thought it uninteresting."

"He looks a very austere man, and so extremely weak and ill," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "But show us Canning."

"Oh, yes, show us George Canning," said Edith; "papa knew him very well, and quite loved him."

You may well believe that Canning's noble face, so full of power, gentleness, intellect, and refinement, received a full meed of admiration. Edith seemed quite fascinated by it.

Then they went to the library. Percival was by no means at home among the pictures of the library. He felt himself insignificant, and relapsed into silence. He could not help wondering at the way in which Lady Edith looked at the pictures. It was so different to that of most people. He had seen various persons in the library looking at these pictures, generally with mere curio-

sity, either hasty or languid, but without much knowledge or intelligence. Edith seemed to comprehend them, and enjoy them thoroughly, her face lightening up in its own wondrous manner whenever the subject or execution pleased her. Whenever any explanation was wanted, Edith seemed the only one of the trio who was able to furnish it.

After lunching, there was more sight-seeing. Bohun, however, did not care to go to the cathedral. He said the "Union" had cost him so much time lately, and he must stay in rooms and read Greek.

So Percival took them to the cathedral. He did his morning chapel daily, that is, the Latin prayers at eight o'clock. Very often also he was there at the four o'clock service. He showed the ladies where they could sit in the stalls, and took his seat beside them. The evening shadows darkened in the cathedral. The anthem was sung—one divine voice, from a little

chorister who looked like an angel, soaring aloft almost to angelic regions. How grandly does the anthem break the pause and silence after the third collect! Once more fell the grateful silence after the sobbings and rushings of the music. Then a clear, noble voice was heard again. It fell like falling silver on the ear, soothing and unspeakably pleasing to the sense of sound. How wonderfully does the human voice affect us at times, revealing in its accents so much of the secret character, appealing to so much in ourselves, with a subtle power to evoke even our hidden sympathies and emotions.

"How beautifully the service was read," said Edith. "Do you know who was the reader, Mr. Percival?"

"It was Mr. Courtenay, the tutor. I was rather surprised to hear him. He does not often read. I suppose he was taking the prayers for one of the chaplains."

"I know Mr. Courtenay," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "I have met him once or twice at the Master of St. James's."

Presently Mr. Courtenay passed out, and he and Mrs. Ponsonby recognised each other. He turned back, and walked through the cloisters with them, talking about the cathedral and the college. In his grave, quiet, subdued manner, he answered all Edith's questions. Percival felt that somehow in the morning of the day Lady Edith had been enlightening and instructing him, and he now perceived that the character of things was changed, and that Mr. Courtenay was doing the same for Edith.

Percival found that this was a wonderful day. When a carriage took the ladies and Bohun to the station, he went back to his rooms treading on air. He seemed quite prepared and braced for any work that might fall to him. Percival never forgot that day.

Neither did Mr. Courtenay ever forget that day.

Percival was sitting alone in his little room that evening. He felt very happy. He sat down light at heart, and did a good deal of work for Mr. Courtenay. Then he laid aside his books to perform his most regular duty of writing to his widowed mother.

Her last letter lay open before him. She wrote from Bromley. She was so pleased with his letter, with the book he had sent her, with the kindness of this good Mr. Courtenay, who was trying to bring him on with his studies. She felt that the winter was drawing on, and year by year she dreaded the winter more. She had some little news. The Ingletons had unexpectedly had a large legacy left to them, and were about to live once more in the neighbourhood of their former affluent home. His youngest sister Laura had at last concluded an engagement to

go to General Leslie's as governess; the salary was not much, but she was promised a happy home; all would be well if only this promise were kept.

God had visited her with many troubles, she had no doubt for His own wise purposes; but her mercies were many; not the least for this good son and the powerful friend who had so opportunely aided him. Sometimes she could hardly bear to think of the days when her husband had his canonry and rectory, and she never thought of the injury which their want of forethought should cause their children. Dear old Donnington! Did Henry ever think of going to Donnington? It was quite within a manageable distance of Oxford, and perhaps he would like to revisit the scenes he had known so well as a child.

It was quite a harsh break on the perusal of this letter, when a knock was heard at the door, and Dudley entered.

Dudley had not yet called on Percival

since Bohun had introduced them to each other; but he had seen him that afternoon with two very fine ladies, and perhaps a little curiosity had fixed this time for his call rather than another time.

"Percival," said Dudley, after some other talk, "what are your particular tastes? Are you a Unionist, or a Ratcatcher, or a Shakespearian, or a Biblical, or a Boundabout? I know you are not a boating man, for I never saw you on a barge in my life, nor yet at cricket or fives."

"I think I could do a little boating, but then it costs such a lot of money, and I have just as much as I know what to do with, and no more."

"Yes, boating is dear, and ratcatching is still dearer."

"Ratcatching is not one of my tastes. I think it cruel and wrong, but not so very expensive. The men who hang about the boats have cages full of them,

and you may kill as many as you like for three-pence apiece."

"You ignorant Percival; ratcatching means much more than killing rats, just as a lobster supper means much more than eating lobsters. It means that you bet, and play at cards, and have a lot of dogs, and hunt or drive, and give champagne breakfasts."

"No, I am not a ratcatcher."

"Don't you hunt?"

"No."

"Fish?"

"No."

"Ride?"

"No."

"Shoot?"

"No."

"Dance?"

"No."

"Good Heavens! Percival, what do you do? Life is not worth having on such terms. I would offer to lend you a pistol, only you wouldn't know how to shoot yourself."

Percival looked grave. He was a literal sort of man, and examined every remark in its literality. "I don't like jesting on such subjects, Dudley."

"But what's a man to say when he finds a man who can't do anything that a man does?"

"I can take a book up and read it for seven or eight hours together with rapturous pleasure. Yesterday I read the whole of 'Paradise Lost,' except the last part of the last book. Now, could you do that, Dudley?"

"I'm not going to try. Seems to me that sort of thing is a mistake. People don't read the 'Paradise Lost' now-a-days. What would a pretty girl say to you at a ball if you talked to her about Adam and Eve. It wouldn't be half proper to begin with. Tennyson's the thing for me. 'Come into the garden, Maud.' They all understand that."

"I hardly understand it."

"If any one else than yourself said so

I should scarcely believe it. But do something. Be a Boundabout. I'm a Boundabout."

"What's a Boundabout?" asked Percival.

"Oh, we are a set of men who are afraid to speak at the 'Union,' so we have a little debating club among ourselves, and speechify in turns at each other's rooms. So we call ourselves Roundabouts or Boundabouts."

"I don't think I could even speechify on so small a scale as that."

"We all speak equally badly, quite a club of Incapables."

"I think I might venture to join a club of Incapables."

"One of those ladies with whom you were walking this afternoon was really a very handsome girl."

Percival began to arrange some papers without answering the remark.

"May I ask who the ladies were?" con-

tinued Dudley. "I saw Bohun with them afterwards."

"No, you may not ask," rose to Percival's lips. He changed his mind, however, and said quickly, "It was Bohun's sister, Lady Edith Bohun, and a friend."

"What a beautiful name it is, Edith Bohun," said Dudley. "And after all," he said to himself, "this little insignificant wretch, Percival, has had a greater piece of luck than I have had with that pretty plebeian at Donnington."

It was very curious that that evening Donnington was uppermost in the thought of both these men, and yet neither of them mentioned Donnington.

CHAPTER IX.

The Testamur.

CHARLEY LESTER'S offence was eventually condoned. The Proctor had some conversation with Mr. Courtenay, and Mr. Courtenay had some conversation with Charley Lester. Then Mr. Courtenay saw the Proctor again, and the result was as I have stated.

Lester had been a favourite with Mr. Courtenay rather, ever since the latter had returned to residence at Oxford. There was something very engaging in his frank, blithe, careless way. He had indeed given great annoyance by irregular attendance at chapel and lectures, and was notorious for the inefficiency of his preparation for his tutors. Latterly, how-

ever, Charley had shown great signs of amendment. For some weeks his attendance had been punctual, and he had very fairly rendered any passage that had been given him from the authors they were reading. Mr. Courtenay had been very glad to notice this. He had tried very hard to be pleasant and gracious to Lester, so far as his shy, reticent nature allowed him, and Lester had been made instinctively to feel that his tutor wished to be his friend; and now came this unfortunate business of the outraged feelings of the Proctor.

Mr. Courtenay was vexed and disappointed; but he represented to the Proctor that, if Mr. Lester did not pass his next examination, he would have to migrate to a hall, and that this would be a sufficient penalty for all offences together. To take up this matter seriously might be to hasten the catastrophe, which, for many reasons, was to be avoided if possible. He himself would reason with

Mr. Lester, who was to be made to understand thoroughly that he had acted badly, and that his thus acting was morally condemned by his academical superiors. Charley said he really was very sorry; he really had been trying very hard to pass at Mods this time. He gave Mr. Courtenay to understand that he did not mean to insult the Proctor; it was only his playfulness. He was in the midst of doing his best when these unfortunate circumstances had occurred. Mr. Courtenay told him that if he would work hard and pass his examination, nothing more would be said about the matter; but if he failed, there would be a universal retribution, in the fact that he must leave Christ Church, when it would not very much signify whether he wore his hat or did not wear his hat.

He requested Mr. Lester to attend at his rooms daily, and work through a set of Moderation papers. Lester's answers to those papers, it may readily be believed

were sufficiently bad; but then the answers of other men would also be very bad. But, upon the whole, Mr. Courtenay felt inclined to believe that Lester had just the ghost of a chance. This opinion, albeit not a very flattering one, served to rejoice and stimulate Charley. Then he also had his reserve fund of mechanical contrivances, whereby cribbing might assist his original powers. Dudley strongly urged upon Lester that he had better strike out and swim for himself, and lay aside corks and bladders. Lester replied that it might certainly be best to strike out for himself, but that it was preferable to use corks and bladders rather than sink.

That was a very anxious day for Charley Lester, when he went in for his *vivâ voce*. Time after time during the examination on paper, he had come back to his room exultant or desponding, as the case might be. On one occasion he showed his paper of questions to Dudley. Dudley

asked him how such or such a question had been answered, to which Charley replied with trembling expectancy, so far as his memory served him. Dudley calmly reviewed the whole of the circumstances, and then oracularly told him that he was a Cropper. It made Charley very miserable to be told that he was a Cropper; for be it understood by the uninitiated, that to be a Cropper, or to go a Cropper—I hardly recollect which was the exact phrase of undergraduate parlance—signified, in reference to the examination, a thing very terrible to undergraduate ears, for it was the euphemism for being plucked. So when his friends asked him how he was getting on, Lester replied that he was afraid he was a Cropper, and his friends accordingly, with easy compassion, pitied him.

On the dreaded day of his *vivâ voce*, one of his friends, with an hospitality not unwonted on such occasions, gave

Lester a sumptuous repast. If the good wishes and hospitalities of his friends could have availed him, Lester would have been very safe. Some of them urged him to eat and to drink, by way of fortifying him for evil reverses; but all the viands were tasteless, and Charley had no heart for enjoyment.

Then they arrayed the victim in a white tie, and led him away to the sacrifice. It was soon ascertained that Lester's turn was not likely to come off for a couple of hours. Then the men left him for a while, contriving, by telegraphic communications, to bid him be of good cheer, and promising to return for the event. Some of the Lester sort went away with dire prognosticating hearts, thinking of *ultimus ille dies et inexorabile fatum*, when they, too, would have to encounter the unpleasant fate of listening to terse questions which they would be unable to meet satisfactorily. Charley found that he had a couple of second

papers. He was uncertain whether he should look upon this as a doleful sign or as a sign of prosperity. The fact indicated that he was not plucked already, but also suggested the extreme likelihood that he would be plucked shortly. He had to do a piece of Latin prose and a Euclid paper. In reference to the Euclid, I am not quite sure that Charley did not resort to his corks and his bladders. To say the truth, he had made some little use of corks and bladders in the course of the examination, and had made himself very miserable thereby.

There was one examiner with a searching expression of countenance, and a very powerful eye-glass, who was continually transfixing the guilty and miserable Lester, and who seemed to read the secret of the hand tattooed with diagrams, and the cuff decorated with irregular verbs. A friendly piece of paper screwed up for him by a feeling friend, had rolled close to the examiner's

feet, and as it had seemed to attract his attention, Lester had not ventured to take it up. Lester remembered a doleful scene, in which a friend had been caught *in flagrante delicto*, and had been publicly directed to leave the schools. So it was with much trepidation that Charley Lester stole a felonious look at the diagram of the proposition, feeling very guilty and ashamed; and although he had persuaded himself that there was nothing dishonourable in an act of mere self-preservation, he had still a most uncomfortable feeling that he was acting dishonourably.

At one o'clock, Lester's friends came back. Other men might be examined in comparative solitude, but Lester had a large personal following who had the liveliest interest in his academical prosperity. So enter Dudley, and Phipps, and Montfort, and a great number of the Lester tribe. They gave grins of recognition to Lester, to intimate that they had seen him before, and under happier

circumstances. There was something very imposing in the long table covered with books, and the examiners, with Rhadamanthine calmness and exactness, putting their questions, and leisurely assigning marks to the answers. Dudley looked round with a careless air of magnificence, for he had successfully sounded those depths and shoals, and had borne off his First. By a nod or a Burleigh-like shake of the head, Dudley intimated to his friends when Lester encountered good or evil fortune.

A group of ladies entered the room, and thought that many of their Sunday-school scholars could answer the Scripture questions much better than Mr. Lester did. Charley did not feel very comfortable in the presence of these ladies, while he was blundering over his questions. Charley, however, had one great advantage—he was not in the least nervous. No academical presence had ever effectually abashed him. Now, our

excellent friend Percival had once in his career been plucked, simply and solely through nervousness and want of presence of mind. It was on a subject which he knew perfectly, and an examiner from the house knew that he knew it perfectly; yet he quite lost his head, and answered wildly and at random. The subject of this pluck was a painful one to Percival, and, though it was soon victoriously retrieved, we did not talk to him about it.

Now Charley Lester answered with easy affability every question that was put to him—that is to say, that he gave an answer of some kind or other. Once or twice he made wild shots; once or twice he felt quite certain of his ground, and made the most of it; once or twice he tried to convey the idea that he was quite familiar with the answer, but that curiously enough it had contrived, in the oddest way in the world, to escape his recollection. But several times he was

distinctly wrong, and was distinctly told that he was wrong. If these were his only errors, it would not, perhaps, have signified so much; examiners however do not generally condescend to tell examinees of their mistakes, but, with the indifference of contempt, pass to other subjects.

Finally, Lester was permitted to leave, and his friends crowded together at the door of his exit. They all were unanimous on congratulating Charley on the pluck with which he had sustained his examination; but whether he had really gone through it well they were unable to say. Dudley was appealed to, and again Dudley unhesitatingly pronounced the ominous judgment that Lester was a Cropper.

Dudley's opinion was looked upon as something final. Montfort, indeed, disputed it. But when Dudley offered to back his opinion by a bet, and give odds, Montfort thought that Dudley was not likely to fling away his money, and would not make the offer unless he was pretty

sure of his point. So this particular bet was not made, but one or two of Mr. Lester's friends staked their money rather freely against him.

It was, somehow or other, a custom at this time that a man should not go to the schools to get his own *testamur*, but that some friend should perform this kindly office for him. This custom was to be duly observed in Mr. Lester's case.

"If there should happen to be a little bit of paper for you, I'll take care that you have it," said Phipps.

"Not much chance of it," said Dudley, looking, I am afraid, not in the least sorry for Charley Lester's impending discomfiture.

One or two of his real sympathizers suggested that Charley should come and spend a pleasant afternoon and evening with them. But a reaction had set in, and Lester, thoroughly despondent, preferred for once in his life to be solitary.

To pace up and down the schools, waiting for the *testamur*, is a very common experience. Occasionally it is a very tedious business. There is sometimes a great deal of discussion among the examiners, before they can agree about the issue of any particular *testamur*. This afternoon Mr. Phipps waited and waited until the afternoon became dark, and the darkness became the gloom of night. Then Mr. Phipps went away, proposing to return shortly. By and by the examiners departed, and there was a rush made to the door for the *testamurs*.

"Was there any *testamur* for Jones, of Corpus?" asked a Corpus friend of Jones. No such *testamur* was forthcoming. "Might there not be a mistake?" asked the anxious friend. "Might not the examiners have forgot it? Might not the officials have forgot it? Might it not be lying on the table? Might it not be lying on the floor?"

All such theories were quite untenable.

The official received a shilling for each *testamur*, and naturally looked after the safety of his shillings.

"Jones would not at all like it," said his friend, "neither would *Corpus* like it; such a contingency had not been contemplated."

Eight men had been examined, and there were only five *testamurs*. Two of the *testamurs* were not claimed: one belonged to a University scholar, who might have been a safe First, but who, having taken a spite at things in general, went in for a pass. He was so exceedingly safe, that neither he nor his friends thought it worth while to make any inquiries after the *testamur*. Every disappointed man insisted on seeing this *testamur*, in case, after all, it might be the *testamur* wanted. The hubbub had just subsided, and the last man was taking his departure, when the constant Phipps arrived on his errand of friendship.

The inevitableness of the pluck had

become obvious to Lester. After going about in a vague and disconsolate manner, he subsided into looking at the newspaper at the *Union*. It occurred to him that he might as well write home and break the intelligence gently to his father. He spoiled nearly half a quire of the best paper, to the great disgust of the officials of the *Union*.

"My dear father, an awful blow has befallen me." This did not please. "My dear father, I regret to say that in all probability I shall be obliged to leave Christ Church." "My dear father, after doing everything that lay in my power, all has been in vain, and the examiners have not passed me."

This last form of the epistle pleased him the best. Then the thought occurred to him that it was not absolutely necessary for him to anticipate evil, and that when the awful blow had actually befallen him, when he had really been obliged to leave Christ Church, it would

be time enough for him to be broken-hearted about it. He was too late for dinner in hall, or for the wonted dinner at the pastry-cook's. He had a chop at the "Mitre," and then, feeling very unhappy, but with hope born of that pint of sherry, went to his rooms, and at his rooms the following sight awaited him.

The room appeared partially denuded. A mighty pyramid rose from floor to ceiling. A second table had been placed on the principal table, and a yet smaller table rose third in order. On this third table were two inverted chairs, and books and pictures were piled around: on the top of these, and to the leg of an inverted chair, was attached a walking-stick which bore the extemporized flag of a white handkerchief, and on the top of the stick there was—no! really! ah, yes! glorious! the much-coveted TESTAMUR! Charley Lester was not, this time, to be a Cropper.

CHAPTER X.

Palm Sunday.

E pass on from winter to summer. Charles Lester had his *testamur* in the winter. June has now commenced. The nominal examination, called Collections, is over. On the eve of a Grand Commemoration, tutors do not feel inclined to be severe, or they might have been severe on Mr. Lester. He had brought up some books which he had brought up on several other occasions. On a former examination this had escaped notice, but on the present occasion it was not allowed to pass unchallenged. Lester had to come into hall for a couple

of days and make a show of doing something, when a certain amount of scorn was shown him by the authorities, and a number of unfeeling witticisms perpetrated at his expense by his contemporaries.

All this entered like iron into Charley Lester's soul. He vowed that he would cut the University and go into the Guards. Poor fellow, he devoutly wished he could! Until he could reconcile his mind to some other pursuit, or some other part of the army, he must grind away at the subjects for the Final Classical examination. His last success was one of those mysterious matters on which time threw no light, and which his friends never expected to see cleared up. Lester felt that that most stupendous event of the *testamur* could never be repeated. It would hardly be worth while to go through the tear, and toil, and struggle of that terrible time. One more such victory, and he would be undone. All

this made Charley Lester deeply sigh after those additional inches which would have released him from the light restraints of academic life.

Neither had these Collections been quite pleasing to Mr. Dudley. By the advice of some learned but eccentric tutor, Dudley had taken up some author which was very rarely brought before the examiners in the schools. It was Dion Cassius, or Polybius, or some more obscure and less read part of Aristotle. To Dudley had come up some young and nervous tutor, who had inquired his subject and professed his willingness to examine him thereon. But when Dudley had mentioned this obscure subject, the young and nervous tutor had turned very pale, and had left the hall on truly frivolson pretexts.

But Mr. Courtenay had come up next, and brightened like a war-horse, over the prospect of an hour's examination on an old favourite. Mr. Courtenay was sorry

to find that Dudley had read the subject in only a careless and superficial manner, and he applied those disparaging epithets to Dudley's work. On the other hand, Percival had achieved a noble object of ambition. He had taken up the whole of the "Ethics," and done them creditably. Percival, whatever his fate in the schools may be, may well congratulate himself on a solid acquisition which will be of use to him the whole of his life.

Dudley had some measure of excuse for himself in being rather troubled by his domestic affairs. His character was hardly an amiable one, stained deeply by selfishness and that littleness of thought and feeling which engrained selfishness has ever a tendency to produce. But various circumstances might be pleaded in his excuse. He was in a somewhat isolated and solitary condition. He was an orphan, and what orphan can be otherwise than isolated and solitary. His

father had been in the army, and died young. His mother had not long survived him. Then he fell into the hands of his mother's only brother, a north country clergyman. Dudley was wont to apply to himself the lines in "Locksley Hall"—

"When in wild Mahratta battle fell my father evil starred,
I was left a helpless orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward."

The guardian uncle, from the epoch of the Babes in the Wood, has often been set down as designing and cruel. This was hardly so, however, in the case of this particular uncle. Dudley's inheritance had been confined not to a few paternal acres, but to a few paternal debts. These, Mr. Dampier, his uncle had paid, and moreover had given him as good an education as he could have given to a son of his own. I hardly think, however, that he would have sent him to Oxford had not this lucky exhibition fallen in. It will be perceived that Dudley had derived a great many advantages from his

uncle, generally the case with nephews in respect to their uncles, and the uncle had no possible advantage to derive from the nephew. Mr. Dampier had been very kind to him in his way, but his way had been rather hard and repellent. He was a dry, abrupt, solitary man; most methodically exact in all his dealings, and punctually discharging every duty. His living was a moderately valuable one; with military precision he performed the routine services; his sermons were sensible, not too learned for his rustic flock, not too plain and careless for the few educated members of that flock; very few parishioners asked him in vain for temporal help, and never in vain to go to the sick-bed. Yet the Rector was very infrequently seen in the cottages, and the attendance at the church was thin. People said that there was a want of sympathy about him—a want of real, kind, human feeling.

There had never been a thorough understanding between Dudley and his uncle.

There was a strong family likeness though, the same hardness and determination of character. To say the truth, Dudley had only a slight passing acquaintance with his uncle. When a boy he was at the famous county grammar school, and only at the Rectory during his holidays. The Rector did not like boys, and the few friends whom he entertained he generally had about him in the times of the vacations. Occasionally there might be no company in the house, and the uncle and nephew would have their glass of wine together. Something of the same sort continued to be the case after the schoolboy had become the collegian. Mr. Dampier took great interest in certain private tastes of his own, and did not realize the living interest which his nephew, endowed with great abilities and compassed with many temptations, might have excited in him, and which would have been a source of permanent benefit to them both.

Yet every man's character is enigmatic

and contradictory, and this rugged nature, like an Alpine precipice, had its fringe of flowers. Among Mr. Dampier's tastes there was a very strong one for pictures. To this taste he had given constant and careful culture. He was a very accurate critic in painting, and had indeed a passionate love and admiration of the art. He had travelled widely in its pursuit, and had never knowingly omitted the examination of a famous picture. Considering his limited means, his own collection was wonderfully good, and his collection of engravings was in some respects unique. On several occasions he had given the half-yearly value of his benefice for a picture. It required in him a measure of self-denial to sacrifice a picture to this allowance for his nephew. The self-denial was accomplished, but the love of art intensified. Another efflorescence appeared in the character of the old man. Within the last twelvemonth he had taken a curate. He had had an illness, and

his constitution appeared to be impaired and his doctor insisted that he should rest.

This was a duty then, and it was also a luxury; and it is to be observed that a duty in the guise of a luxury is not to be resisted. There came to Mr. Dampier a middle-aged curate with a whole bevy of marriageable daughters. The curate was in some respects a disappointed man, and this had imparted to him a measure of acerbity which was not at all disagreeable to the Rector's subacid disposition. His disappointment had been of a very common kind, and had been met by a resignation which happily is also very common. He had spent many laborious years in a town parish, where he had manfully done his duty. He had reserved no time, or tastes, or studies for his own private benefit. He was a man of energy and learning, and had he devoted half his time to bringing out a Greek play, or the more modern path of promotion, a critical edition of the Epistles, he might have had

his chance of a mitre. He made no such reservation, but had humbly hoped that his constant labours would not be lost upon his bishop.

The bishop probably had to contemplate the constant labours of a great number of people, including perhaps many of his own friends and relations; at any rate, the promotion never came. Then, for the sake of his own health and the health of his children, he gave up his town curacy and came into the country to help Mr. Dampier. Among the bevy of daughters, the prettiest, gayest, and most intelligent was the third, Alice Singleton. Dudley had spent two days at his uncle's in the Christmas vacation, and had admired Alice very much. They had had some long walking excursions in the country, and though fresh from his admiration of Rosalind, he was inclined to look very favourably upon Alice, and had resolved that upon a future occasion he would bestow his society for a

longer space of time on his avuncular relation. But the singular fact became patent to Dudley that the young lady cared much more for *Avunculus* than for himself. Somehow a kind of friendship and intimacy had sprung up between the old rector and the curate's daughter. Ultimately, within the last week or ten days, he had proposed for Alice and had been accepted. In some points of view it was undoubtedly a good match for Alice. But I do not think that this consideration had weighed very much with the young lady. She had really become very much attached to the old man. And now, in the autumn of his days, a kind of summer of St. Luke had visited the old rector's heart. It was quite a triumph to Alice to see how the ice of his hard, dry, reticent nature had thawed and melted, and that the soft living waters beneath sparkled and brightened. It is however to be said that very little of this happier phase appeared in the letter which Dudley

had just received on the Saturday evening before Palm Sunday, a kind of official document, in which his uncle had just indicated to him his approaching change of life.

"St. Olave's, May 31st, 185—.

"My dear Nephew,—I write to inform you that I am engaged to be married to Miss Alice Singleton. There will be no delay beyond what is absolutely necessary for the completion of the settlements, and a few alterations in the house. In all probability we shall be married in six weeks.

"We shall, of course, be very happy to see you at the wedding. But whether it will be worth your while to make so long a journey for this object is a matter for your own consideration. I do not ask you to come this approaching Long Vacation to the Rectory, as we shall be abroad for some part of it, and when we return it will perhaps be more agreeable to my future wife not to receive visitors for the present.

Before the day of my marriage I will send you an extra sum of £25, which ought to cover your personal expenses during the vacation. If they exceed this sum, you can receive the difference on application to myself. As you will be going in for your final examination after the Long, it might perhaps be as well that you should have some private tuition. In my time, however, it was not the clever men but the dunces who stood in need of private tutors. You can, however, arrange this and report to me thereon.

"This brings me to the saying of something in respect to your plans in life. You will probably be prepared for the announcement which I am about to make. I do not contemplate continuing the allowance which I have hitherto made you after the time that you have taken your degree. I have thought it right to make you this allowance during your residence at the University, although with inconvenience to myself. I do not see that I am called

upon to do so after you have graduated. My power to do so will be materially limited after my marriage. But you will be fairly launched upon the world, and be fully competent to earn your own bread. A tutorship or a classical mastership at some good school might profitably employ you for some years.

"For your own sake I sincerely trust that your very creditable success at Moderations will be repeated at Greats. A young man with a good degree and habits of prudence and industry can always do well. Before long, I trust you will find your way to a Fellowship. I am sure Miss Singleton would desire to be remembered to you if she was aware that I was writing.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"JOHN DAMPIER."

He might be a worthy man, this Mr. Dampier, but there was certainly something hard and unloving in his letter, and the primary part of it was of a very

disagreeable nature. "A disgusting old screw," muttered Dudley. "Twenty-five pounds for a Long Vacation is an uncommon close fit." Mr. Dudley might be right in such an estimate, but he regarded the question simply in reference to himself, and not in reference to his uncle. Yet he knew perfectly well that his uncle was not a man with a reserve sum in the funds or at his banker's, and that his marriage would cause a considerable outlay.

"At any rate," thought Dudley, "I shall be now obliged to take up my quarters at Donnington. Affairs look gloomy, but Rosalind will console me."

In various respects affairs were gloomy with Mr. Dudley. His income, the income which was so soon to cease and determine, was an exceedingly limited one for the college to which he belonged and the society which he kept. "What a man requires at Oxford," Mr. Montfort had once observed to him, "is not having plenty of money in his pocket, for exceed-

ingly little money will be enough, but he must be able to command large sums when he wants them." Now the reverse of this was the case with Dudley. His exhibitions and his allowance kept him in pocket-money, which he spent with a judicious profusion, which gave people the ill-founded idea that he was a man of large means, when he was in reality a man of very small means. His income was narrow, but better men than Dudley had lived on an income still narrower, and had made no debts.

Dudley had a great many debts. His debt to the college kitchen was rather large, and here there was no credit, the payment being terminal. Mr. Dudley had been largely entertained, and, without being extravagant, had entertained largely in return. Heavy bills came in from grocers, wine merchants, print-sellers, tailors, *et hoc genus omne.* One or two little documents had come in with pretty printed headings, handsome representa-

tions of the University arms, and some flourish about the court of the Vice-Chancellor. Dudley had been in rather urgent want of money. It had occurred to him that some of his wealthier friends might lend him some. He had asked Montfort, the richest man he knew, in a careless sort of way, to lend him ten pounds. Montfort declared that he was utterly unable to do so. He should be so very glad to do so, but his expenses (he could not possibly be spending more than half his income) had never before been so extraordinarily heavy.

After this request, Montfort no longer, Dudley observed with regret, asked him to make up a breakfast party, or to take part in a game of cards. There was a good deal of card playing in those days at Montfort's rooms, and one or two ugly stories in connection therewith. I think Montfort's friendship would have been true to the extent of ten shillings, but then ten pounds was far too serious a demand on his moral nature. He noticed, too, that

the face of Montfort and the faces of Montfort's friends were not to him as they had been at other times. Then there came an imperious demand upon him from his wine merchant. He had had enough of trying to borrow as a matter of friendship, but it might be possible to borrow as a matter of business. He consulted a friend of rat-catching propensities, who told him that it was perfectly possible. There was a certain tradesman who would readily do it. The tradesman totally disclaimed that his vocation was that of a money-lender. But if Mr. Dudley required a little bit of accommodation, he had no objection to do his best for him, "as between man and man." It would only be necessary for him to sign a little bit of stamped paper, and also to procure the signature of some solvent friend. This was simply a customary kind of protection for the lender, but only a legal form, as the transaction was essentially "between man and man." Dudley had asked Lester to sign.

"My dear fellow," said Lester, "nothing would give me greater pleasure, but I think there is only one thing which my father made me promise, and that is that I should never have anything to do with transactions of this kind."

"I'm afraid it's not an over-reputable sort of thing," answered Dudley.

"You're quite right," answered Lester, with more gravity than Dudley had ever given him credit for, "if you mean that it's an excessively disreputable sort of thing. I don't mean to say that there is anything really bad about it," continued Charley, most anxious not to wound, "and in fact, I believe there's plenty of most respectable people in the city of London who do it very often, and nobody thinks the worse of them for it; but somehow it's a custom which has not taken much root among University men."

Dudley muttered something about customs varying, and that what was good in one place ought to be equally good in another.

"But how much money is it that you want to borrow, Dudley?" said Lester.

"About forty pounds."

"Oh, that's not much. I'll let you have forty pounds with pleasure, if that will be the same thing to you."

Dudley said it would be something much better.

"Here you are then, old fellow, with lots of pleasure; here's the exact figure. And if an ignorant little beast like me may advise an awful swell who has taken a first at Mods, I would tell you not to meddle with this sort of thing. And that Jones, who put you up to the dodge, in my opinion is only a vicious sort of customer."

It would have been very well if the leonine Dudley had allowed himself to be helped by the mouse Lester. Lester's advice was even more valuable than his coin. As Dudley took the coin he thought for a moment, rather remorsefully, that Lester had been a truer-hearted friend to him than ever he had been to Lester.

The borrowed money hardly seemed to prosper in his hands. He had tried to take a childish revenge over Montfort by giving a party that should be a better party than Montfort's. The scheme was a failure, for the friends of both declared that they always enjoyed themselves more at Montfort's than they did at Dudley's. The Honourable Algernon declared that at Dudley's rooms there was an unpleasing preponderance of men who were merely fast, and had nothing in them. Lord Melfort had been at Dudley's wine, but he had just tossed off a single glass of sherry, and stayed five minutes. Dudley little knew how Melfort had anathematized that glass of sherry, and indeed it was very bad, truly a vile Oxford mixture.

Still it was a point to the tuft-hunter, to be able to have received Lord Melfort for those few minutes. Dudley could make social capital out of that. Oh, why did not Dudley remain true to the honest Boundabouts? Why did he run after

Exquisites and Ratcatchers? The Boundabouts had their little debates among themselves, and read their little essays to each other with much mutual pleasure and advantage. They were pleasant, gentlemanly, intelligent. Some of them will win their way to high position at the pulpit, the senate, and the bar. They were something better than a Club of Incapables, as Dudley had described them. His own attendance at their meetings had grown very rare. Percival, however, was very regular, was making friends, and was gaining confidence and courage. He had come out with a neat little speech on his favourite subject of Charles the First and the Great Rebellion. Dudley, on the other hand, had gone rather freely into very free society. He again found himself in great want of money before the allowance from his uncle came in. Disregarding Lester's advice, he went to the money-lender, who this time did not insist on an additional name, but on

rather usurious terms advanced him a sum of money, "as between man and man."

There is just one other event to be mentioned previous to the Grand Commemoration.

The Honour Class List in the final schools came out. Mr. Bohun was the only Christ Church man on whom, at this present occasion, high hopes were placed. But he was going in rather too early, earlier than Percival or Dudley, earlier even than his friends thought to be quite wise. But Mr. Bohun generally knew what he was about. The sooner he took his degree the sooner would he get into Parliament. So he went in and waited for the result with trembling anxiety.

The class list came out, and the first name in alphabetical order, in the first class, was

"*Bohun, Algernon, Hon., Ex Ædc Christi.*"

Dudley bounded away alone to tell Bohun the news.

Bohun received the news that he was a First in a characteristic manner. He was carelessly glancing over some newspapers and magazines.

"Am I really? I am sure I am very much obliged to you for coming to tell me. It is very kind of you. What a lovely evening it is! I think it is the finest sky I have seen this spring."

And then he moved off to his rooms with his heart leaping with exultation. This was the last great step towards entering Parliament. The degree acquired, this was to follow. But you see that he thought it the proper thing to manifest no kind of feeling. He was political and diplomatic in the matter of his emotions.

The morning of Palm Sunday came. How softly it broke over the country, how musically over the city. Is it only fancy, or, on the early Sunday morn, is there a brighter gleam in the sunbeam,

a softer tenderness of the shadows, a greater freedom in the carol of the birds? How differently the day broke on the countless sleeping chambers of the city. Here it aroused men, heavy from their orgies, thoughtless, thankless, beginning once more their careless daily round, laying their plans of pleasure, and with no thought beyond their little schemes of vanishing occupation and enjoyment. Here again the newborn light fell upon uplifted faces grateful for the holiness of repose, upon lips whose first motions almost unconsciously framed accents of praise and thanksgiving, upon open Bibles, upon the oratory of the secret chamber.

The sweet melodious Christ Church bells seemed to be more distinctly heard across the country. Across the quadrangles, and beneath the archway, and up the cloisters connecting the quadrangles, flitted the white-gowned students to the full cathedral service at

eight o'clock. Let no one say that this service is a mere matter of routine and parade. I have heard that men will beguile the time of service by reading books or by other irreverence. I can only say that anything of the kind never fell within my own observation. To a large number of the men the service was a service of love and devotion. The reverence and solemnity was not altogether lost on the most careless.

Very nobly did the grand cathedral music flood the old cathedral, while the rich early sunlight shed its refulgent glory on the worshipping multitudes, the white mass of the youthful crowd, the famous and reverend men who knelt in their stalls, the timeworn arches and pillars that outlived so many generations of such throngs, and then the abiding sense of Eternity subdued and equalized all things by its vastness.

Assuredly Mr. Courtenay was deeply impressed by the *religio loci*. He was

one of the earnest types of religion, who would be called a strong evangelical, and his ministerial experience had hitherto altogether resided in a large iron and manufacturing district. There the strong, visible, leading matters of divine revelation needed to be pushed home to the heart by simple, vivid representations, with earnest appeals to the heart and conscience. Assuredly this is required both in the stately cathedral and in the plain Peel church of an ecclesiastical district. But in the minster we may believe that a number of other ennobling influences are also at work which may be blessed to a divine end; the senses educated and purified, inclining heavenwards in music, pause, and echo; a grateful memory recalling the pious benefactors who for us branched this glorious roof and bade us worship here; a feeling of oneness with all those who have ever assembled or shall hereafter assemble here, which is itself a foretaste of the

communion of saints. Mr. Courtenay's prejudices were wearing away. He now loved this cathedral service and its many associations.

That is a wonderful scene, the Broad Walk on the evening of Palm Sunday. The stately Dean of Christ Church moved slowly down the noble walk which is the glory of the house. For a few minutes the Earl of Derby was to be seen. There is the Honourable Impulsia Gushington, the last great London belle, famous for beauty and *esprit*. Here come Lord and Lady Bohun, with their second son and with the daughter of the house of Bohun. The eldest son, Lord Atherley, is away on his travels in the East. Very pleased and proud is Lord Bohun to be at Oxford just now. It is the time of his son's triumph, and he must come down to rejoice in his joy. He stays to speak very kindly to Percival, to Lord Melfort, and it was on this evening or on the next day that Dudley was

introduced to the Bohun party. The Earl had also something to say to Mr. Courtenay, something, I believe, about his cousin, Mrs. Ponsonby, and her relation the Master of St. James's. Mr. Courtenay had been sorely troubled in mind as to whether he ought to walk the Broad Walk that evening. Would he not be partaking in a scene of unholy frivolity? But Mr. Courtenay modestly shrinks from branding that noble company, comprising so many pious and illustrious persons, with the name of Sabbath-breakers. His mind misgives him whether such little scruples may not indicate a narrow and Pharisaical nature, and finally he acknowledges that, if this had been an ordinary Sunday, he would very probably be taking his usual walk adown that green arcade. This last consideration determined him, and he took his walk, and encountered therein a pleasant recognition and sweet smile from Lady Edith.

Lady Edith had never before encountered such a fine specimen of an Oxford man as Charles Dudley. She saw him under very favourable circumstances. She saw him in the procession of boats, in which he was one of the most prominent figures of the Christ Church boat. She screamed with terror when the boat was upset and the brave men that manned it were plunged into the river. Her terror would have been modified had she been acquainted with the fact that Mr. Dudley had himself upset the boat on purpose, that he might perform feats of safe courage and practised agility. She was at the Christ Church ball and at the *Union* ball, and at both of these he was her partner, as graceful and as manly a partner as the crowded rooms could find. She contrasted him favourably with Lord Melfort who hovered about her as her shadow, probably because Dudley was only an occasional and welcome visitor instead of being a constant quantity.

She liked Mr. Courtenay also very much in his way. He had certainly a wonderful pictorial power in bringing before her those images of bygone times with which Oxford teems, and explaining all the local allusions. Mr. Courtenay, being obliged to go into mediæval times, found his Puritanism sensibly relax as the history, and self-denial, and heroism of the days of old came vividly before him, and he did justice to the undoubted good which co-existed with the undoubted evil of the past.

As they proceed from one ancient college to another, from lawn to lawn, from chapel to chapel, from library to library, fresh stores of information were evolved with grave quiet eloquence. Hitherto Lady Edith had mainly read history in quartos, where the events seemed as unreal as if they had happened in one of Jupiter's satellites. But now each stone had its story, each grey battlement its tradition, each college was almost

a living chapter in the history of England. In these rambles in the old colleges, Percival sometimes made one. He was never visible at a ball or at the boats. It was perhaps quite as well that Mr. Percival should see so very little of Lady Edith.

In this last paragraph I have anticipated matters, and deviated a little from the course of my narrative. It left us on the evening of Palm Sunday, and to this point I return. The Sunday had been spent very differently by the different persons of our tale. Algernon Bohun had quietly breakfasted with his people, and had taken them to the University Church. There the most eloquent prelate of the age had advocated a special cause dear to Christian philanthropy. In the afternoon they had of course been to the cathedral service. Dudley had been to a large champagne breakfast. The wine had flowed very freely. Even the scouts, who lamented that things at Oxford were altered so much from the old days, ac-

knowledged that this particular feast of Charley Lester's argued no degeneracy. You may readily believe that no one found his way from that festive board to St. Mary's. The Bishop's eloquence was no attraction in that direction. Apollos would have failed to attract. A learned and pious preacher about this time had taken Sunday as the subject of his Bampton Lectures. He was anxious to distinguish the Christian Sunday from the Jewish Sabbath. So far as any practical results were involved, that eminent divine might have been very sure the Oxonians would not fall into the error of a too rigid and Judaical observance of the day.

"Whatever may be the difficulties connected with the origin, or the present obligation of Sunday," Mr. Courtenay had said to Percival, "let nothing cheat you out of the real and most satisfying blessing which the peaceful and religious observance of Sunday always brings to the devout soul."

Percival had spent his Sunday thus. I do not altogether hold up his plan for imitation, for all could not possibly follow it, and, moreover, it had its mistakes. But after the morning service he had taken a class at a Sunday school attached to one of the Oxford churches. Then he attended full divine service at this church. Herein I think he was wrong. I think Alma Mater had indicated to him his proper course, to attend and realize his own chapel service, and then to hear the preacher she had appointed for him at the University Church.

But Mr. Percival liked the sort of service to which he had been accustomed, and preferred to be in a pew, and amidst a general congregation, and preferred a simple, practical discourse by a "rousing" minister to a sermon which might have cost many anxious days to some celebrated orator or thinker. He will attend the University sermon in the afternoon probably. He will also visit any

very urgent case of sickness in his district. Then with a few friends he will read the Bible and hold a prayer-meeting. Probably some wise and experienced Christian will demur to this last. I do not discuss the question, but I say that he is better occupied than various other men. He is better occupied than Warner, the Balliol critic, in the new review, who devotes his Sunday evening to getting up Compte's Positive Philosophy, or will engage in a deep metaphysical controversy with a few kindred spirits on the Absolute and the Unconditioned. Again, he is much better occupied than Charles Rolfe Dudley, who has had a party of men playing cards in his rooms, and partaking of brandy and water.

The men had left Dudley's rooms. Dudley was wondering what he should do with himself; should he go about and see who was stirring? should he write to his uncle? should he turn in and have a good sleep? His room was in a dis-

ordered state, and was filled with the horrid fumes of tobacco. To its owner it appeared but little inviting, and he was preparing to leave it. But just then a rapid step was heard along the passage.

"It is very late to look him up," said the visitor to himself, "but I think I saw a light in his window, and I shall not have another chance this term of saying what I have to say."

Then a light quick rap came to the door of the room, for the oak had not been closed.

"Come in," roared Dudley, with a coarse expletive.

The door opened, and Mr. Courtenay, the tutor and censor, stood before him. Dudley started. A visit from the tutor to an undergraduate, where he is not a private friend, is a rare thing, and is to be considered an honour. Mr. Courtenay's quick eye took in the disreputable appearance of the room, and the pained

expression of his face might have told Dudley that he was certainly not about to hear words of mere compliment.

Dudley stammered out some words of apology, and expression of gratification on account of the honour of the visit.

"I really cannot say, Mr. Dudley," said Mr. Courtenay, gravely, "that considering this is Sunday evening, your room does you any particular credit."

"That," answered Dudley, not without a shade of impudence, "is probably a point which would admit of much discussion. I have yet to learn that to entertain a few friends on a Sunday evening is, in any point of view, unallowable."

"I will not discuss the question with you as a matter of argument," replied Mr. Courtenay; "I am a little afraid that I should do so on grounds which you might not quite appreciate. As a practical man, I generally find that when Sunday evening is spent in this sort of way, the rest of the week is frequently

unsatisfactory. But let that pass. It was not about this that I came to see you this evening."

Dudley was silent, and waited to hear what the reason of the visit was. Mr. Courtenay stammered and hesitated. He could not at once adopt a dignified tone of authority, for it was no mere official rebuke that he came to administer. That had been lately done at Collections. Neither had he any glib facilities in commencing a solemn conversation. The words "My dear young friend" rose to his lips, but he instinctively discarded them as being too much of a shibboleth.

"Mr. Dudley—Dudley," he continued, dropping the prefix, "you hardly know it, but I try to take a deep interest—or rather the deep interest comes without my trying at all—in the men with whom I am brought into close contact here. I take a deep interest in yourself."

"Very good of you," said Dudley, with

the least touch of sarcasm in his tone. "Now, then," he continued to himself, "if he has got a little tract in his pocket, ten to one that little tract makes its appearance."

"I think several of us take much interest in you, Dudley. You have done us, and you have done yourself much credit in the schools and on the river. But I am afraid that in the first of these you will disappoint us at the last."

"Very likely, sir. The scholarship work at Moderations suited me very much better than the history and philosophy of Greats."

"But you are a man of tolerably matured mind, and this ought not to be the case. Now I have watched you carefully, and I think you have the remotest chance in the world of being a First next term, and, unless you work hard, very slender chance of being a Second."

"Not at all unlikely, I should think. For myself, I am very glad you apprehend

the real state of the case, and do not form an exaggerated idea of what I am likely to do."

"I am sure you could do remarkably well if you chose to work, but evidently you dislike work. Like other of our exhibitioners, I presume you are a man of not very extensive means. Now, you should remember that a very good degree may be computed to be worth several thousand pounds."

"I should be truly thankful for several thousand pounds; especially just now, when I am coming to the wind-up at this place."

"I know that you are a great deal in the company of rich and expensive men. That must necessarily lead you into heavy expenses. Perhaps you have debts?"

Dudley reddened and lied. "Not more than I could pay if I was called upon to pay."

"I am very glad to hear it. Forgive me if I seem intrusive, but I remember very

well when I was a young man at college, the case of several young men who would have been all the better if some friend had had the boldness to speak to them as I am speaking to you. A kind and gracious Providence saved me, through a wise and holy friend, from many temptations when I was a young man, and I should be truly grateful if in my turn I could be made the instrument of doing some like good to others."

Dudley was silent.

"Dudley, my friend," continued Mr. Courtenay, "I have spoken to you now as I think the tutor of a college has a right, yes, and is in duty bound, to speak to one of his men, respecting whom he is satisfied that he is wasting his brilliant prospects by his own negligence and sin. But oh, Dudley, oh, my dear boy, I am also an unworthy minister of God, and I must say something more to you—I must deliver a message which is troubling my soul until I deliver it.

"Can I think, knowing what I do of you, that you are one of those who lift up pure hands of prayer to your Maker, and love to meditate upon the hidden treasure of His Word? Ah, come to that loving Saviour who would fain make you happy! I have spoken of the temporal losses that belong to a careless and unconscientious life, but think, think upon the eternal losses, the eternal gains, which await the issue of our days here. God loves all, but those who come to Him in their youth, and freshness, and first love, He especially delights in and gathers most closely beneath the shadow of his wings. There are necessities of the soul far beyond the reach of college success or failure. In misfortune or illness, the loss of friends or the approach of death, we can only find rest upon the Everlasting Rock. The Saviour will sympathize with all sorrows, and guide you through them till you come where there is no sorrow. If you have sinned in a careless, irreligious life, arise

and wash away your sin in the fountain open for uncleanness and transgression. Pray, Dudley, pray, and you will not be far from the kingdom of heaven."

Dudley was silent, awed into solemnity and into some feeling of wonder and alarm.

"I do care for you, Dudley; I care personally for you very much. I only wish that I could easily prove my regard for you. I do not offer you every assistance you can want in your reading; it is always yours whenever you choose to avail yourself of it, but unfortunately for this long time past you have not so chosen. It has been a very great effort to me to come and speak to you thus, but thank God I have made the effort. And I will pray for you, Dudley, and will be your friend if you will let me."

And Dudley saw that his hands were clasped, and that his lips moved as if in prayer.

In a moment he was gone, after a silent close shake of the hand. For a few mi-

nutes Dudley seemed thoroughly subdued, and rested his face on his arm. Then he almost mechanically opened a Bible. But presently the Bible was closed, and he lay listlessly down on his bed, musing now on the tutor's words, now on the stay he contemplated at Donnington, until slumber came upon him.

CHAPTER XI.

The Grand Commemoration.

HE old walls, the rain-worn stones, smiled in the rising sun. The young light fell on the indentations of the walls, on the capitals of the arcades, on the brilliant foliage of the ivy. Trailing roses and honeysuckles climbed the walls, and their flowers trembled and glistened in the light breeze. The fountains murmured in the wide silent courts. The charming city looked in the morning mist as gorgeous and as tranquil as a fairy palace, and its robe of soft pink vapour, like an embroidered robe of the Renaissance, was brocaded with towers, cloisters, and palaces, each

framed in verdure and flowers. The architecture of all ages mingled ogees and fleurs-de-lys, statues and columns; —time had blended their tints, the sun united them in its light, and the old city seemed like a shrine, where all ages and all styles had wrought and effaced each its jewel. Beyond, the full river flowed in broad sheets of shining silver. . . . . Around, as guardians, enormous trees, four centuries old, stood in lengthened files, and I saw in them a new trace of the practical good sense which has accomplished revolutions without committing ravages, which, while improving everything, has destroyed nothing, which has preserved its trees as its constitution, pruning out the old branches without felling the trunk, and which now, alone, among the nations, enjoys not only the present but the past."

This is an eloquent and truthful passage from M. Taine's "Histoire de la

Littérature Anglaise." It very exactly describes the fair city of Oxford in the still fresh dawn of one of the glorious days of the Commemoration. That commemoration time has been so often professedly described by various writers, that I only deal with it so far as it is directly concerned with the fortunes of the different personages of my tale. Those three days are the true Oxford Carnival. They were spent rather differently by our different friends. They did not, as a matter of fact, see very much of each other. The Bohuns at Oxford are not as the Dudleys or even as the Percivals. The Earl had to dine with two or three other earls. A long promised visit was to be paid to a great potentate who had an historical seat in the neighbourhood. The very reverends and the right reverends of the ecclesiastical society had also their social relations with them. Mrs. Ponsonby was staying with her relation, the Master of Saint James, and the Master of St.

James, and at times his friend Mr. Courtenay with him, assisted the ladies in a thorough exploration of the University.

In these three days, however, the interest of the present predominated over the interest of the past; music and dancing over the archæological. The Countess did not care for balls; she showed herself only, and Mrs. Ponsonby did the active work of chaperoning Lady Edith. Lord Melfort was in great force on these occasions. Percival did not show at all. He had never been at a ball all his life, and he would have felt truly miserable there. Dudley, however, was at two or three; for him also a sort of introduction into the great world, an introduction which pleased him greatly, and it must be added that with his good animal spirits and fine animal person he greatly pleased others. Percival consorted chiefly with some quiet mild-eyed youths of his own tastes and standing. They breakfasted together,

and took long walks across country, or punted on the Cherwell, and combined their respective commons for festive lunches. The three days rapidly rolled away in what seemed to them a savage dissipation.

Every one, in fact, was bent on enjoyment, and in a way achieved it. Of course, different people have different notions of enjoyment. A certain distinguished scholar of a small college had migrated to Balliol by the honourable mode of obtaining the coveted Balliol scholarship. He kindly explained to the authorities of the small college that he was very sorry to part with them, but really their lectures were by no means up to the mark. He availed himself of the leisure afforded by this vacation in term time to compose a considerable portion of an original Greek drama. Another man of similar tastes, but inferior proficiency, contrived to prosecute his spirited design of reading right

through Liddell and Scott's Lexicon. In future years he pointed to this Commemoration time as the period in which he had done Kappa and Lambda.

But Lady Edith and Mrs. Ponsonby took it into their fair heads that they should like to go down the water, and have a picnic at Nuneham. The Countess would come, but Lord Bohun was compelled by his public duties to return to London. Percival was mortified that he had hardly had five minutes' speech of him. Lord Bohun had, however, made inquiries respecting him of Mr. Courtenay, and had suggested to his Countess that Percival should be invited to the water party. Who were to row them down?

"Could Mr. Percival row them down?" suggested Lady Edith.

Algernon Bohun stated that he had no doubt Percival was a muff on the water. He added, with perfect candour, that he was little better than a muff

himself, and would prefer to ride down to Nuneham and join them at their *fête champêtre.* Would Lord Melfort go? Lord Melfort would be very happy, and he was moreover a strong-backed man; stronger by many degrees in his back than in his head. Who else should go? Bohun thought of Dudley, who was of the Christ Church eight, and might very probably become one of the University eight. But he did not like Dudley very much, and would greatly have preferred Warner of Balliol. Warner, following Göthe, held strongly that he was bound to develope the whole of his complex nature, both the noble animal and the intellectual being. But in developing his complex nature on the water, that noble animal Warner was unquestionably in the habit of catching a great many crabs. So Warner was rejected, and Dudley, to his great gratification, honoured with an invitation. Percival was to steer, which he did rather badly. So

a roomy boat was procured, as much like a gondola as could be found on English waters.

Percival did not enjoy the expedition much. Lord Melfort did not bestow any notice upon him beyond muttering a curse whenever Percival brought them too near the bank. He had never been introduced to him, and so did not feel himself called upon to say anything civil. If you had not known Melfort to be a nobleman, you would hardly suspect him to be a gentleman. Melfort and Dudley passed him over with very little notice. Dudley shone to great advantage; his rowing was admirable. He had his little narratives of adventure about each point on the river. He remembered all the races, and the upsets, and the men who were drowned, and the historical bumps.

One or two other boats passed them, with the occupants of which Mrs. Ponsonby had arranged that they should all meet at Nuneham. Percival was not much

happier at Nuneham. Bohun was there, and said some civil things to him. But it struck Percival very forcibly—the same thing had struck him once or twice before —that Bohun was patronizing him. He felt rather bitterly that if he did patronize him, that was the simple case. He really was the patronized of the Bohuns. He did not have a word with Lady Edith. He heard her ringing laugh, and saw her take Lord Melfort's arm. He felt jealous, and angry, and miserable. "Like mates with like," he muttered to himself, "rank with rank, wealth with wealth, imbecility with imbecility." He had leisure to make himself wretched. In the brilliant little company he only knew those who seemed not to care to know him.

Could it be possible, it suddenly flashed upon his mind, that he was in love with Lady Edith? He was in blank astonishment at his own idea. Gaze upon the moon in stately march through the midnight heaven, and suddenly charm from

the orb Diana, "huntress, chaste and fair," to clasp an earthly Endymion. Gaze on the billowy ocean, and suddenly from wreathed veils of foam bid Aphrodite appear to dower an earthly being with her love. Just as soon would this lofty being step from her superior sphere to that humble one in which his own lowly lot was cast. Common sense came to his aid. He called himself an idiot, in which he was certainly much more accurate than when he pronounced my spirituelle Lady Edith to be an imbecile. Finally, the arrangements were altered, and he did not go back in the boat, neither was there a place for him in any carriage; so he paced back to Oxford with plenty of space for his wounded feelings to torture him, and afterwards to repent his own stupidity.

The next day was the Encænia, and moreover that year of commemoration which is called the Grand Commemoration. Most brilliant did the Sheldonian Theatre appear. On the floor the moving

mass of men; tier above tier the radiant circle of fair women, the fairest flowers of earth arranged in their parterres; and above, again, the gallery thronged with the impetuous undergraduates. There was quite a crowd of distinguished men who had come down for their honorary degrees. Presently, amid a cheering which seemed as if it would never die away, entered the Chancellor, the Earl of Derby. He entered covered, the only one in that vast assemblage, and behind him, bareheaded, the Chancellor of the sister University, ALBERT, the Prince Consort. Wonderful indeed was that great concourse of high talent and high estate. Lady Edith's heart quite shook, and tears gathered to her eyes from the indescribable emotion of the moment.

She was aroused, however, by finding herself the object of universal attention. The undergraduates had classified the ladies by their colours, and had vociferously cheered each colour of the rainbow.

Then the stentorian voice of Dudley was heard demanding three cheers for the lady with the diamond cross, which unfortunately glittered rather conspicuously on Edith's attire. Lady Edith recognized the voice, and felt very red and very angry. Dudley's call was enthusiastically obeyed, for the Master of St. James's brilliant party had attracted great attention throughout the University this commemoration. The public attention soon passed away from Lady Edith to some one else, and then she forgot Dudley's offence, or took it simply as a silly compliment to herself, which the usual licence of the time permitted. Presently the essays and poems were recited. Oh, how Percival longed that it had been his lot to advance to the rostrum and recite a Newdegate! He had actually written for it, but the incompetent examiners had given it to some other man, whose composition, Percival, of course, adjudged to be perfect rubbish. Oh that he could only be a Double First!

Would not that be, as it were, a daring leap to bridge over the mighty interval between them? Silly boy! you would have some graceful compliment, or perhaps a hearty congratulation; but this great feat would be forgotten in a quarter of an hour, and make room for other compliments and congratulations. Lady Edith would praise you as she would a clever child in a Sunday-school; she looks upon you as a child, without being at all sure—and indeed the point is doubtful—whether you are a clever one or not.

Nevertheless it was rather oil upon the waters when the ladies very kindly wished him good-bye that afternoon. Percival thought, quite truly, that perhaps their apparent neglect at Nuneham had been altogether unintentional. The Countess, with her inimitable sweetness, told him how gratified Lord Bohun had been with the account he had heard of him from Mr. Courtenay; and that Lord Bohun

hoped he would come and spend a few days at Ladymead Park in course of the long vacation.

The brilliant afternoon of the next day was waning. The roll of carriages and cabs had been incessant. The company gathered together from far and near for the Grand Commemoration, was breaking up. The men had been lounging on the terraces, making their adieux, and kicking or caressing their dogs. All the tribe of porters, servants, chance helps, errand boys, were trying to make hay while the brief summer lasted, before the dull long vacation commenced. Percival had gone to Mr. Courtenay's rooms. He found them empty; but as the oak was not sported, he was unwilling to go without wishing his kind friend good-bye, and so waited in hopes of his speedy return. He had not long to wait before Mr. Courtenay came back.

"Well, Percival," he said "it is all over with poor Jones."

This was the poor sick servant of a scout whom we have mentioned in a previous chapter.

"Indeed, is it really so?—at last."

"It is very wonderful to me how he should have lasted so long; to linger through the hard winter and the bleak spring, and to die this glorious summer time. He died yesterday, about the time that we were at the theatre during the commemoration."

"I went to see him last Sunday evening, and had intended to go again to-day, the last thing before leaving Oxford. I thought he was not long for this world, but he had lingered so long that it was impossible to be sure that the end was quite at hand."

"It was just that prolonged course of discipline and instruction which so many of us need. He, lay down, first, in his sickness an ignorant infidel; one might also say that he died a matured Christian. It is what one very often sees, the gradual

education of many months' sickness and weakness which loosens the bands of earthly things, and which even in this life makes one more at home with the things of the invisible world than with the things of this."

"He always did me good, sir, when I went to see him; he was so patient and submissive in his sufferings. So far as any outward signs of trouble went, his mother and aunt seemed much more afflicted than he himself."

"Just at the last he rose up in his bed, and his eyes strangely brightened; and, raising his arms feebly, he whispered a few peaceful words, and, with a look of unutterable happiness, he passed away. Such scenes at the very last are not, I think, very uncommon, and encourage the humble hope that if we are true to our faith our steps will be wonderfully lightened and supported when we mostly need it, and the passage hence be, per-

haps, one of the purest happiness, instead of pain and dismay."

"I think I will go and see his mother."

"Perhaps, my dear boy, it will be hardly necessary. I will take care that the poor widow's wants are duly attended to. And now about yourself. What are you going to do during the long vacation?"

"I don't know very precisely, except that I mean to read hard. I shall be at Bromley a little and at Ladymead Park a little. Lady Bohun has asked me to come down for a week, but I do not know that I shall go. Perhaps I shall find a pupil somewhere."

"Do as little of that as you can; make the vacation of the best use you can to yourself. You notice that set of books?"

"Yes."

"Those are the books which I used in my own reading when working for my class. I have taken away a few which have grown obsolete, and have added a

few of the modern lights. You are very welcome to their use as long as you like, and may make any marks you like in them. And here is something to pay for their carriage," added Mr. Courtenay, putting down a twenty-pound note. "No thanks or objections, please. You shall borrow this till you are a well-to-do man, and then you shall help some nice fellow as I have helped you, and as others before have helped me in other ways, if not in this. Now, good-bye, Percival. Write to me sometimes, and never forget to put up a bit of Latin prose in the envelope."

Percival left Mr. Courtenay a little saddened by the death of the poor scout's son; much affected by the tutor's kindness and forethought for himself; rather elate with this kindly present, which would make him very comfortable for the vacation. Mechanically he strayed down from the great Christ Church portal in the direction of Folly Bridge. Presently

the Bohun carriage and pair rolled past, on the way to Ladymead. Percival recognized Bohun's shout of salutation, and imagined he saw a lily hand waved towards him. He was standing beneath the overhanging gables of the antique house, in the darkened upper room of which were lying the cold remains of the poor scout's boy, liberated from his bed of sickness. Oh that wonderful contrast of youth and splendour, health, wealth and rank, with solitariness, poverty, and death! Oh the wonderful contrast, too, of contending emotions, of varying feelings in the same human breast, as the young scholar leaned back against the wall of the lowly death-stricken building and watched the brilliant equipage which bore off the patrician family to their lordly home.

"But may I not thank God with a grateful heart," said Percival to himself, as for the last time he traversed the Broad Walk, before leaving it for the

summer; "may I not thank God with a grateful heart? Friendless, He has raised me up friends; ignorant, has made me love learning; thoughtless, has made me reverence His law and Word, and has given me a good hope of finally attaining His heaven, as my hope is our brother yonder hath. How contemptible are those bad, bitter feelings which I felt the day before yesterday; yes, and how contemptible the poor transactions and pleasures of this world, unlinked with love and duty. As for that glorious Lady Edith, what a presuming, romantic idiot I must be to be dreaming about her, instead of working hard to deserve her father's kindness; to think of anything beyond would only show me that I must be an ungrateful and ungentlemanly cad."

CHAPTER XII.

Donnington.

DUDLEY speedily put into execution his long-dormant plan of going to Donnington. First he was instigated by Messrs. Lester and Phipps to run up to London for a few days and stay at the Tavistock, and look about him. Lester propounded the daring and novel proposition that he required relaxation. He had never got over the hard work which attended that neatly-glazed Testamur. Any amount of relaxation extending over any amount of years would not be too much relaxation. Then Phipps, who had just been triumphantly plucked, also declared that he required relaxation. Then

Dudley, with unblushing hardihood, stated that whether he required it or not, a point which he had no intention of discussing minutely, it was his intention to be relaxed.

The trio relaxed accordingly. Dudley, however, soon discovered that he was an earthen vessel in company with iron vessels, or, to vary the fable, that the expenditure which would be fun to them would be a pecuniary demise to himself. So he made a merit of necessity, and announced to his companions that he might as well take another first, and, therefore, he had better get into reading-quarters and apply his powerful mind to the subject. He also intimated that even at Donnington there were very good opportunities in the way of relaxation. He would have an opportunity of sporting with Amaryllis in the shade, and with the tangles of Neæra's hair. Dudley explained apologetically that he did not pretend to have read Milton through,

like that humbug Percival, but he had once turned something very much like that into Latin hexameters at some examination. The simple youths listened with great admiration, and did not think it necessary to trouble Dudley for his quota of the bill at the Tavistock.

In the casual visits which he had made to Donnington, Dudley had been on the look-out for the sort of lodgings which he would require. The peculiar ecclesiastical position of Donnington easily occasioned the supply of his wants. When there was a married rector, Donnington had always maintained the necessity of a bachelor curate. But now Canon Prendergast was the bachelor rector, and smitten by the love of the opposite, insisted on the supreme necessity of a married curate. Consequently the Turtons, of tea and turn-out propensities, had come into residence as curate and curatrix. All this worked badly for one Mrs. Thompson. She had in her cottage

a couple of prettily furnished rooms, which, much to her private emolument, she had let out to quite a series of curates, until Canon Prendergast hit upon this connubial theory, which his friends supposed he had derived from the Russian Church. Her rooms were consequently vacant, and had been vacant for so long a time that Mrs. Thompson had lost several stone in weight—which she could very well afford to lose—partly from anxiety, and partly from the want of perquisites. She assured Mr. Dudley that she understood gentlemen and their ways perfectly.

So Dudley struck a bargain and secured two rooms, quite as comfortable as his own at Christ Church, for a very moderate rental. He had sent down all the books he was likely to require from his own dismantled rooms at College. He really had a very honest intention of working, in case he should come to the opinion that his chances made it worth

his while to work. The roses clambered up about his window, and nearly every morning his good-natured landlady placed fresh flowers on his writing-table. Even Dudley could appreciate the stillness, repose, and retirement of the place after the festivities of Oxford and the uproar of London. There was a positive pleasure in reading Mill's Logic, note-book in hand, and in collating Grote with Thucydides.

For nearly a week he kept away from the Grange, where the Larpents resided. Nobody called but the curate, who was struck with awe when he found that the new inmate of Mrs. Thompson's lodgings was a Christ Church man and a First Classman. Dudley perceived this, and mildly patronized him. All sorts of prudential considerations kept him at a distance from the Grange. It would never do that the Larpents should imagine that he had fixed upon Donnington as his quarters because they lived there,

or on account of the young rural beauty. He also acutely argued with himself that if it was worth his while to work, it would not be worth his while to flirt very much. They don't make allowances in the schools for Amaryllis and Neæra. And what, he asked himself, would be the upshot of intimacy with the Larpents, if he permitted an intimacy? Why, he supposed that he would become engaged to Rosalind. That, he thought, would be a great mistake. A man in debt would be no marrying man. If he was to marry, he could only marry some one who would pay his debts. But was it not perfectly possible that he might be on very pleasant terms with the Larpents and nothing amatory come of it? It might have occurred to Mr. Dudley to inquire whether there had been anything of this sort already. He must be cautious.

The farmer wondered why he had not seen the lad. His wife hoped he had not

felt slighted. Rosalind was very anxious. By and by he called, and was reproached for being so great a stranger. Such a reproach did not attach to him long. Dudley's good resolution gave way. He allowed himself to drift into the current of events. The intimacy was renewed, and Messrs. Mill and Grote had very small chances in comparison with pretty Rosalind, whenever any conflict of claims arose.

It was a certain Sunday. Dudley had not been to church in the morning, but then he had read the thirty-nine articles all through, and had learned some of them by heart for the ensuing examination. Being of a listless disposition and quite undecided what to do with himself, when evening came, he allowed his vague notions of duty to impel him in a right direction. As he took his coffee and his cigar, he listened through the open casement for the mellow music of the Donnington peal of bells. He thought it would

be a decorous thing to plunge his head into cold water and try and get rid of the smell of smoke. Also it entered his mind that it would be part of the Sunday to brush his hat with pains and regularity, and put his face inside it when he should arrive at the church. Then he passed through the gateway, up the path, into the porch. Here two or three old men were standing or sitting, who touched their white locks, while the stranger gentleman passed by them. Two or three little girls were gathering daisies on the churchyard sward and weaving them into a necklace. They had been playing merrily among the tombs, all unknowing or heedless of the realities of death, and regarding funerals only as a sort of pageant. The Canon had noticed them as he had returned home a little while ago from visiting a sick parishioner, but had forborne to check them as he watched their merriment, leaning upon the low wall and thinking how soon poor old Betty would find her last resting-place.

He thought of the lines of the poet—

> "And like a happy infant, Faith
> Can play amid the graves."

"Rightly understood, God's acre is not a gloomy place," he thought to himself. "As Bacon said, we fear it as these babes here fear the dark. *Mors janua vitæ*, the gloomy gateway to the splendid mansion. Let the children play. May they regard the things of death as cheerfully when they know them better." So the Canon passed into his house to see if he could write a letter to his mother, and snatch a cup of tea before it was time for church.

Old Giles, the sexton, put Dudley into a pew, the next grandest to the Squire's. Here he was diligently observed by the bucolic part of the people. Dudley did not in the least mind this. He knew he was a fine, stalwart fellow, and also exceedingly well dressed. The people came dropping in by twos and threes, and the innocent little children dropped the fine gentleman

a curtsey as they passed him in the aisle. Presently the owner of a white muslin dress and a pretty bonnet blushingly passed up the aisle to a distant pew. This was Rosalind. Then the organ, played by the schoolmaster's wife, began its soft prelude, and the choir sang "I will arise."

The curate had taken a holiday, and Dr. Prendergast had taken the two full services. When the music was over, Dudley folded his arms, and prepared leisurely to listen to what might follow. It did not occur to him that this was a social religious service, in which he had his own part to fill. Somebody was to read aloud in the Prayer-Book, and it was his business to listen, or at least to assume an attitude of listening. He was very much amused with some worthy old saint who followed all the prayers with a loud voice, and in particular gave the absolution with much energy. It occurred to him that probably the Canon would lug in two or three of

the Fathers about which he might be rather satirical when he was at the Larpents'. Dr. Prendergast did nothing of the kind. He gave a short, pointed, practical sermon, such as the little children I have mentioned could understand in part.

Once Dudley was painfully aware that Dr. Prendergast directed his voice and turned his looks towards him. This was, in fact, a habit of the Canon's when he observed any of his people listless or somnolent. Dudley did not like this, and mentally resolved that he would not expose himself to this kind of annoyance a second time. Still, as the beautiful service was read by the Canon in a noble manner, what time through the western windows the skies were all aglow with the mellow sunset, Dudley felt the charm of the echoing sound and of the deep repose. Something which the Canon said in his sermon put him in mind of the plain words he had heard from him last autumn, and also of

Mr. Courtenay's warning. At the end of the service he again put his face to his hat, and perused the name and address of the maker. Then he hastily made his way out of church, in great terror lest Dr. Prendergast should arrest and question him. It would be a great thing to avoid the doctor and meet Rosalind. He succeeded in both these objects, and the young couple arrived at the Grange in good time for supper.

Farmer Larpent, in a rough kind of way, had his own theories of life and duty. These were influenced by the traditions of his youth, to which he had adhered with some fidelity. He insisted that his wife and child should attend church every Sunday morning, and that Rosalind at least should also attend, when practicable, the evening service as well. He also considered that it was his own duty to go to church in the morning, so far as might be convenient; but he construed this provision in a liberal manner, and I am afraid he

sometimes stayed away to read his newspaper, or to balance his accounts. Also the farmer insisted on a hot dinner on Sunday, with a rather better supper than ordinary in the evening.

Mr. Dudley had been made to understand that he would always be especially welcome on Sunday, and that the Larpents would be pleased if he could spend the day there. Mr. Turton had supped there one evening, and had tried to argue the farmer out of the custom. It would be better if people had a cold dinner on Sunday, in order to prevent work, and allow the servants to have their proper rest. Rosalind, however, had declared that the miserly Turtons had a soul which could not soar beyond cold mutton. Mr. Turton's reasoning might be irrefragable, but the farmer's prejudices were offended, and he said he would not ask Mr. Turton again in a hurry. So there was a hot supper, and something hot after it. Mr. Larpent waxed voluble. The girl was

silent and happy. The mother pleased and observant. Mr. Dudley dexterously watched and tended the ladies, and was at the same time profoundly attentive to the observations made by the farmer. Mr. Larpent talked of his land, how valuable land was, and the acres which he had bought for so many pounds he would now sell for so many pounds more. He talked of his horse and trap, how he got them a great bargain, and though he had received their value many times over, were still something worth having. In fact, he glorified himself to a considerable extent, while Dudley praised the land, and praised the horse and trap, and praised the supper, and praised the farmer and all his doings and his belongings. I remember Wesley always had and expressed a dislike to farmers. This particular farmer, though full of hospitality, and of love for his own flesh and blood, could be both shrewd and hard.

As an ordinary rule, Mr. Larpent did

not have family prayers at his house. There was nothing of the kind from Monday morning till Saturday night. But on Sunday evening, according to the tradition of his fathers, Mr. Larpent had family prayers. He considered also that this was a kind of set-off to his non-attendance at evening prayers at church. A short while before the ordinary time for retiring to rest, Farmer Larpent's face assumed a look of unwonted solemnity. Mrs. Larpent hemmed and coughed. Rosalind primly drew herself up. The dog that had been playing about the room, a recipient of choice favours, subsided on the hearth-rug. Then the farmer reached down a volume of Scott's "Commentary," and said to his guest, "Those who come to this house, Mr. Dudley, must be content to abide by its ways. We are going to have prayers. Call in the servants, my dear." Then the mankind and the womankind, residing on the farm, came in two and two.

There was a real solemnity about Mr. Larpent's manner, as he opened the big book. The cares and businesses of this world might absorb him too much, and prevent his giving due attention to the things of the other world; but the farmer would say truly that he knew what was right, although he was not always at leisure to practise it. He read out the second lesson for the day, at first a little nervously, as if rather ashamed, but gaining confidence, and assuming a loud, broad way of reading. There is always a sanctity in a father, gathering his family and children around him for worship. Although a little disconcerted by the proceeding, Dudley did not fail to recognize this sanctity. The young girl, in the helplessness, grace, and tenderness of youth, the mother pleased and placid, the father reading the words of life out of the broad-leaved volume, reproduced the scene, so common in English households, and always beautiful. Could Dud-

ley eat the salt of that hospitable table, rest on their hearth, and join in their devotions, and then lightly meditate treason against their peace? The farmer read some of Scott's wise remarks, and if Dudley had attended to them, he might have learned something. Then followed some of the prayers of the church. At the third collect the dog jumped up and howled, for he knew it was the end of the little service. There was not the reality and the devotion about it which Dudley had so often witnessed at his uncle's; but the thing was in itself good, and as such it impressed Dudley in a vague sort of way.

That night, when their guest was gone, the farmer and his wife had a little conversation about him, while Rosalind was dreaming on the same subject.

"I think he's one of the right sort," said the farmer. "But I wonder what makes him come to Donnington to read?"

"He showed me part of his uncle's

letter, who tells him to settle down somewhere for the summer to read. He says Donnington is handy for Oxford, where his books and tutors are."

"May be so, old woman; may be so. But happen the books are locked up, and the tutors gone away." Here the farmer certainly stumbled on the exact truth. "I am not such a fool as I look. I can see through a ladder as well as most men. I shouldn't wonder if he comes after our Rosalind. Now, I am not going to stand any nonsense."

"La! Mr. Larpent, how you do talk. Is there any harm in the young man talking to our Rosalind? Young people must talk together, and for the matter of that, if their friends approve, come together, or how's the world to be kept going?"

"It mighn't be such a bad thing for her," said the farmer, "nor yet for the youngster either. When you and I are under the sod, old woman, she'll have

the Grange and a strip of land about it, to keep it up in a sort of way. But I shan't give her a sixpence afore that. I'm not going to take off my clothes before I go to bed, as you may have heard tell in history."

"I'm sure whatever he means, he means honourable, Mr. Larpent. But you must not marry him off at once, because you have given him a bit of supper. I dare say he'll be very glad of it, for it's lonesome at the cottage all by yourself on a Sunday night. You sharp people, father, are often a great deal too sharp, and make mountains out of molehills."

"Likely enough, old lass. But one must just say what comes uppermost at the moment. Keep an eye on them, and that will be quite enough."

"He very kindly said yesterday that he would give Rosalind some lessons in French, if she liked to keep her French up. After all the money we spent for

her at Miss Crewker's, it would be a pity if she lost the good of it all. I think it would be a great advantage, for I am sure he speaks French better than Miss Crewker herself."

"It is not for the likes of us to settle that question," answered Mr. Larpent, modestly depreciating his non-existent French.

"Now that the French have become our natural allies, as people say, everybody is learning French more than ever."

"Bother our natural allies," returned our patriotic farmer. "I hate them as my father hated them before me. I should like to hold all their heads under the Atlantic Ocean for a quarter of an hour."

"Oh, my dear, how shocking, and Sunday night, too!"

"Well, he may teach her a bit of French—it may, perhaps, be a saving—but he had better not teach her anything else." The farmer smiled at this

touch of his own humour; but a true word was spoken in the jest. "We'll see that all's fair and square. I shall look very sharp after him, if I think it necessary. It would be no loss, though, if she didn't keep up her French. Very bad, them French principles, I've always heard tell. I hope he won't put any of them into her head, which is silly enough already."

Then the farmer added, "Good night, God bless you, my dear," and turning round, slept, to use one of his own terms, as sound as a piece of architecture.

The farmer, doubtless, intended to be very sharp. But he thought also that he had perhaps exaggerated the matter, and that it was rather conceited in him to suppose that the Oxonian must be in love with his daughter. The Oxonian fully tested the parental acuteness, and for a time this acuteness was at fault. Dudley construed the verb *aimer* in every

tense, mood, and combination in the hearing and sight of the old people. Rosalind's French was tolerably fair. Like most English girls, she had pottered over it half her little lifetime. Dudley's was exceedingly good; Mr. Dampier had made him spend some time in Paris on two or three different occasions, intending that he should probably go in for an Indian Civil Service examination. Rosalind, with her usual quickness, rapidly progressed by his guidance. Mr. Dudley speedily announced that he and Rosalind ought to confine their conversation as much as possible to the French language. He soon discovered that it was as strange to the old people as Arabic or Chinese. Dudley used often to drop in for the two o'clock dinner. He was not insensible to the fact that the hospitalities of the Larpents made a saving of his own purse.

The elderly Larpents listened in conscious pride as the French, more voluble

than accurate, flowed from the young lady's pretty lips. They greatly admired the fluency and purity which they conceived characterized the speech of Mr. Dudley. They perhaps would not so much have admired the substance. Dudley told Rosalind—in very good French—that her eyes were the most beautiful he had ever seen, and he adored the ground she walked on. Poor Rosalind accepted this, partly as an exercise in phraseology, and partly as a declaration of private opinion. With the most unblushing assurance, he told her of his own private arrangements, and persuaded her to fall in with them. He proposed an assignation for the evening, while father and mother were bending forward to catch the unintelligible sounds.

"Meet me at the brook to-night, and pass the mustard."

Rosalind smiled.

"You are fishing under the Willows, and you want me to come and talk to you."

Here the mustard was passed, and the conversation was supposed to relate to that or some other trifling subject.

"I shall be fishing after sundown. That is the time for the trout to bite."

"Now, Mr. Dudley, what might the English of that be, which you have just said?" interposed the farmer, who, true to his notion of sharpness, thought he might as well drop upon them now and then.

"I was making Miss Larpent a speech in French, to see if she knew the words. I was saying that it was commonly observed by naturalists that fish eat best after the set of sun."

"It is not unlikely, then, mamma and I may take our walks to-night by the Willows," said Rosalind, still in French.

The Willows was a favourite spot. It was near a confluence of waters, where a little brooklet, flowing through what was the ancient forest, made its way

into the Thames — a shallow, pebbly stream, with trout and grayling. Dudley tried to read Greek and fish at the same time; but the instinct of the sportsman prevailed over the attempted character of the student. Mrs. and Miss Larpent were in the habit of taking a walk every evening, after tea, and if Dudley had mentioned the Willows, it would so happen that the ladies directed their walk to the Willows. Then Dudley would join their stroll. Mrs. Larpent would recollect that she had something to do at Donnington, and would leave the young people. This was rather weak-minded in Mrs. Larpent. Then they would wander about the wood, or by the side of the brook where Dudley would keep up the pretence of fishing. Often an invitation was given and accepted, of going back to supper. Mrs. Larpent was not a wise old lady, and, as a matter of fact, was weakly given to match-making.

The farmer was substantially right in his prejudices against the French scheme. The lessons did no good. Rosalind read a great deal of rubbish which could really do her no good. Dudley was not so fiendish as to wish to do her harm by these readings; but his French library consisted of a lot of novels; and, acknowledging the genius of Dumas and Victor Hugo, I think young English girls may well be content with less exciting fictions. Dudley did himself a good deal of harm; he went through an extensive private course of Dumas and Victor Hugo. These distinguished living writers do not assimilate very well with those other distinguished living writers, Messrs. Mill and Grote. Still less do they assimilate with Aristotle and Thucydides. Mr. Dudley developed a growing taste for fiction and love, which may be very good in their way, but militated against severer pursuits.

A little surprise was in store for Mr.

Dudley. It was the Tuesday following the Sunday of which I have spoken. After breakfast, Mr. Dudley read the "Times" of the previous day, which the early post had brought; then he languidly resumed his analysis of the Ethics. Presently he laid down the Ethics, and looked at the pictures in a French novel. From the pictures to the letterpress was a very easy transition, and Dudley wasted a valuable hour on a worthless story.

About twelve, he thought he would take a walk "down town," as the Donnington people called it. It will be remembered that the Grange was outside the town, and Mrs. Thompson's lodgings were between the town and the Grange—only a little way down a secluded path branching from the high road. Mr. Dudley had just reached the end of the lane, when he saw coming along the high road from the town, at some distance, a person with whose figure and appear-

ance he seemed familiar. Coming nearer, he recognized Henry Percival.

"What in the name of fate brought you here?" demanded Dudley, to say the truth, by no means over-pleased at the meeting.

"I might rather say, what in the name of fate brought you here?" answered Percival.

"Did you drop from the clouds?" said Dudley, not noticing the cross interrogatory.

"No, I dropped from the top of the coach. Where did you drop from?"

"I am staying at Donnington just now. Found out that there was good fishing here, and also that it was a quiet place for reading."

"Where are you staying at Donnington?"

"I don't suppose you will be much the wiser if I tell you. At Widow Thompson's, down the lane."

"At Widow Thompson's! You don't say so. Fat Mother Thompson still alive! I will go and see her."

"Why, how do you come to know her? You seem to know the place pretty well."

"Know the place! I should think I did. Why, I lived here for the first thirteen or fourteen years of my life. My poor father, when he was Canon of St. Orwell, lived here for a great number of years. But I have not seen the place for the last six or seven years, and I have come down to look up my mother's old friends."

"Do you know the Larpents?"

"Rather. Ever since I can remember. There used to be a little girl there, about my own age. I wonder what has become of her?"

"She's still extant, and, let me tell you, Master Percival, that she's a deal too pretty for this outlandish place."

"Is she, really? Then I shall have an additional pleasure in renewing my acquaintance with her. I rather think she was my first love—when I was at the mature age of six."

What a conceited ass that Percival is; always pushing himself where he's not wanted. I should like to punch his head. So Dudley thought within himself. He contrasted his own brawny, athletic limbs, with the slight figure before him, and felt quite tempted to crush him to the earth.

Percival walked on in utter ignorance of this unamiable feeling, and even unobservant of the not over amiable greeting. He was dazed, in a dream. The "forward flowing stream of time" had flowed back for him. The burial-places of memory were yielding up their dead. A mental mob of recollections and associations came pouring into his mind. Yes, there was the great tree, looking in the distance like a vast cloud of verdure, that overshadowed the village green; there the gates of the rectory; there the gables of the Grange; beyond, "bosomed high in tufted trees," the Hall. It seemed only yesterday since that sad event—always to stand pre-eminent in terror and grief,—

his father's death. He remembered how that kind father used to lead him by the hand when he was a very little boy; how tenderly he soothed him when he had that awkward fall from the lowest branch of the big tree; how he made him repeat texts and hymns; or lying with his children on the new-mown hay, told them Arabian stories which set their young imaginations on fire.

In the few days during which Percival stayed at Donnington, much more vividly came back the recollections of the good parent. He indeed discerned that the old inhabitants looked upon his memory rather with much affection than with very great respect. It used to be said by some of the clergy that the old Rector had cared more for the temporalities than the spiritualities of his people. He had in his day diffused a lavish hospitality, and no one enjoyed the well-spread board better than he did himself. If he passed the village inn he would not disdain a

foaming pewter. If he called on a farmer he would occupy a chimney corner in the vast kitchen, and smoke a long church-warden. He was more profuse than discerning in his expenditure. That expenditure at times outran his plentiful means, but things generally righted themselves by the end of the year, for he could not bear the thought that any man should be a loser by him.

Nevertheless, in his business arrangements he was certainly irregular and unpunctual. He was no business man, that easy-going rector. Any man so base as to seek to profit by that generous simplicity, could very easily cheat him. He was also a very trying man in various respects. Mrs. Percival did not know till dinner-time who would come to dinner. Uncouth strangers, in queer and travelled-stained garb, would sometimes arrive during the good man's absence, and announce that they had come by invitation to spend a fortnight. Mrs. Percival

would grow eloquent on her wrongs, but the Canon had, fortunately, a deaf ear, which he literally turned towards her. If he found any one who seemed to be friendless and in want, the Canon took it as his special duty that he should board and lodge that man. There was one text which he constantly quoted to his worthy wife, and by which he frequently silenced her. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." It almost seemed that in his case the text had received an almost literal accomplishment. The Canon had once encountered a man who seemed very seedy and despondent, and had comforted him by his hospitality, and interested him by his conversation. This individual was in fact a wealthy humourist, who had one of the best seats in the adjoining county. At this gentleman's table the Canon had once or twice met Lord Bohun, who had thus been able to recognize and opportunely

help the son of his old and respected acquaintance.

If Dudley had been treated with respect and hospitality in the village, Percival's movements resembled a triumphant progress. The doors flew open at his approach. He was beloved by strangers for his father's sake. Everywhere he heard something in favour of that good father. It seemed to be an instalment of the promise that the righteous should be held in everlasting remembrance. This decrepit old man told him how, when the rheumatism first set in grievously, the Rector had carried him up stairs in his arms, and tended him as if he had been a child; this poor asthmatic woman had for years been supported daily by the dinner sent from the Rectory table; this humble tradesman had struggled through his losses, and flourished upon the timely loan. If Dr. Percival had confined himself to such cases as these, it would have been well. But it must be confessed that to a great extent he pau-

perized and demoralized the parish. There was nothing of this kind with Canon Prendergast. The Canon had been heard to say—I think he had borrowed the observation from a celebrated prelate—"that he had done many things which he ought not to have done, and had left undone many things which he ought to have done; but he had at least the solid satisfaction of being able to say truly, that he had never given sixpence to a beggar." Canon Prendergast was always ready to help in a really necessitous case, but he was rigorous in his inquiries, and did not possess that intensely genial and sympathizing nature which so endeared his predecessor to the hearts of the parishioners.

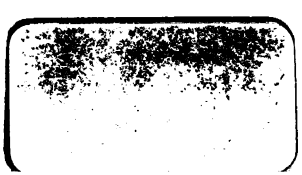
Canon Prendergast heard that the son of that predecessor was in the village, and sought him out, and made him promise to come and dine with him. Hearing that Percival had left his carpet-bag at the little inn at Donnington, he sent his man

for it, and insisted that Percival should take up his abode with him during his stay at Donnington. This was particularly good of the Canon, as his time was very precious to him just now, for he was deeply engaged on an enormous pamphlet, which was to exterminate in the bud the last new heresy. Nor was this Percival's only invitation; he took tea with the Larpents, and the farmer, with affected anger, told him that he ought to have let them know that he was coming, and he was welcome to a bed under his roof for as many nights as he chose. He constrained Percival to say that he really would come to them the next time that he came to Donnington. All this, you may suppose, was vastly pleasant to the feelings of Mr. Dudley, who, of course, put down poor Percival as an impertinent interloper, as he said to himself that he would be very glad to be closeted with him in a sawpit for a quiet half-hour. Neither did he at all approve of the warm interest which

Rosalind visibly took in Percival, and her innumerable questions about his mother and sisters. Percival came out in a more amusing and animating way than Dudley could have thought possible. This made Rosalind animated and amusing. Dudley felt very sure that, after all, he was a much more interesting object than poor Percival could possibly be, but he nevertheless gave vindictive scowls which half-frightened her. After Henry Percival had gone away to dine with the Canon, it needed her most caressing manner and voice to soothe his ruffled feelings.

While the young men were both at Donnington, Dudley took care that his intimacy with the Larpents should not be very conspicuous in the sight of Percival. He tried to divert attention by talking a great deal about Lady Edith; perhaps with a view to remote contingencies he inquired whether it was true that Lady Edith was a great heiress. Percival, perhaps a little foolishly, but anxious to glorify his great

friends, magnified Lady Edith's considerable fortune. She would have a great deal, doubtless, from her father, a great deal under her mother's settlement, and a great deal from a legacy which had been left her by a bachelor uncle; all which things Dudley carefully noted, and, in reference to the last, thought it would be judicious to make an inquiry at Doctors' Commons. But Percival was not put off the true scent by all this. He went into all the cottages of the village with a freedom which would have astonished Dudley, and the gossips freely took him into their confidence, although he did not seek it. A small rural town is a fine field for gossip. Inquisitive eyes had marked the rambles by the Willows into the forest. All the rustics had put down Dudley for Rosalind's admirer, and thought that an engagement was regularly concluded between the young people.

END OF VOL. I.

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